

Florin Japanese American Citizens League
Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

MARY TSURUKO TSUKAMOTO

October 14, 1996

October 15, 1996

October 17, 1996

October 31, 1996

Sacramento, California

By Joanne Iritani

Florin Japanese American Citizens League
and Oral History Program
California State University, Sacramento
Sacramento, California
Special Collections and Archives



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

FLORIN CHAPTER • PO Box • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95829-2634

PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Many Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin, or have relatives and friends who once had ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the spirit of community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Several hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in the relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, prewar experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind. They were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their seventies, eighties, and nineties. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jackie Reinier, former Director of the Oral History Program at California State University in Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also wish to acknowledge the project members, volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation, and the Taisho Young Mens Association which contributed some of their assets as they dissolved their corporation on December 31, 1991.



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IN APPRECIATION

by Marielle Tsukamoto, Mary's daughter

Mary Tsukamoto often expressed gratitude for all the support given to her by friends and family. I have taken the liberty to list names of persons that I felt needed to be recognized. As we selected photos of various events and activities, we tried to note the many, many persons who actively supported these worthwhile projects. I know that had she lived to see this oral history project completed, she would have mentioned these names and many more. I apologize to any persons who may have helped and were not included on this list. Members of Florin JACL, South Sacramento Tanoshimi Kai, VFW Post 8985, and Jan Ken Po Gakko parents and family members were often called upon to assist. The following is a partial list of persons who consistently gave their support and help. Arigato!

Ernest Abe	James Abe	Mary Freeman
Amos Freeman	George Furukawa	Myrtle Furukawa
Vi Hatano	Mas Hatano	Kuni Hironaka
Myrna Hitomi	Sallie Hoshisaki	Tom Hoshisaki
Dan Inouye	Joanne Iritani	Frank Iritani
Mary Ishikawa	Marlene Itagaki	Dorothy Kadokawa
Kimi Kaneko	Marion Kanemoto	Bob Kashiwagi
Bill Kashiwagi	Sam Kashiwagi	George Kihara
Utako Kimura	Nami King	John King
Ted Kobata	Kern Kono	Grace Kono
Tommy Kushi	Frances Kushi	Janie Matsumoto-Low
Wayne Maeda	Walter Menda	Lennie Mizusaka
Teri Mizusaka	Sandra Michioku	Lois Nakashima
Tom Nakashima	Pauline Nishina	Aileen Nishio
Andy Noguchi	Kinya Noguchi	Roy Sato
Kiyo Sato-Viacrucis	Sus Satow	Heidi Sakazaki
Tom Sasaki	Ruth Seo	Janice Tahara
Sue Takata	Emmie Takehara	Jim Tanaka
Twila Tomita	Hiroko Tsuda	Arlene Tsukamoto
Christine Umeda	Stan Umeda	Bob Uyeyama
Georgiana White	Hannah Yoshinaga	Henry Yui
Etsu Yui	Ida Zadrow	And many others!

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER

Joanne Iritani is a Florin JACL member, President in 1996-97, Education Chair, and retired special education teacher with a master's degree from California State University, Bakersfield.

INTERVIEW TIMES AND PLACES

October 14, 1996, 11:30 a.m.

October 15, 1996

October 17, 1996

October 31, 1996

Oral History Interviews with Mary Tsuruko Tsukamoto were video taped at the California State University, Sacramento Archives.

TRANSCRIBING AND EDITING

Joanne Iritani transcribed from the audio tapes which were duplicated at home by playing the video tapes of the interviews. Some editing was done by Joanne Iritani.

EDITING AND WRITING

The major editing was done by Mary Tsukamoto and new materials were written to tell a more complete story of her life and of people who were major influences on her life. Additions and deletions of the narrative transcriptions were primarily decisions of Mary Tsukamoto.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Dan Inouye, member of Florin JACL, reproduced the primary picture. Several pictures were copied from the family album to include in this book.

LAYOUT OF PHOTOGRAPH COPIES

John Marshall, former student of Mary Tsukamoto, copied family photographs and did the artistic layouts. Numerous hours were spent to include a wide range of photos on limited space.

Marielle Tsukamoto, Mary's daughter, provided the text to the photographs based on notes left by Mary Tsukamoto. The majority of the text was written by Mary.

TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of the bound transcript and the tapes, audio and video, will be kept by the Florin Japanese American Citizens League and in the University Archives and Special Collections, California State University, Sacramento, 2000 State University Drive East, Sacramento, California 95819-6039.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

1915 - 1998

Mary Tsuruko Dakuzaku Tsukamoto was born on January 17, 1915 in San Francisco, California, and died on January 6, 1998 in Sacramento, California just before her eighty third birthday.

Mary was born to Taro Chosei Dakuzaku [1887-1964] and Kame Yoshinaga Dakuzaku [1884-1975] immigrants from Okinawa, Japan. Her father came to the United States in 1906, experienced the earthquake, and had a laundry business with his brother Choshin where they were victims of prejudice. Mary's mother gave birth to Masako, left her with her mother-in-law in Japan, and came to the United States in 1911. Ruth Haruko, Mary Tsuruko, and Isabel Sumiko were born in San Francisco. Jean Yoshiko, Julia Toshiko, and George Tomomitsu were born in Turlock and Parlier.

In San Francisco, following Mary's mishap with a streetcar, missionary ladies of the Reformed Church took Mary and Ruth to their nursery school. This was Mary's first experience with the Christian Church. Later, she went to the Japanese Methodist and Congregational Churches in Fresno, and the family were members of the Japanese Methodist Church in Florin. Mrs. Kohana Sasaki, wife of the Rev. Y. Sasaki in Florin, was Mary's mentor in the area of religious and Japanese cultural activities.

Mary and Ruth lived with Uncle Choshin and Aunt Nobu Dakuzaku in San Francisco and Fresno, while their parents tried farming in Turlock and Parlier. Mary's father moved his family to Florin in 1925, grew strawberries and grapes, and later built his family's house.

Mary's formal education began in a rural area and then at a racially diverse neighborhood school in the city of Fresno. With the move to Florin, she entered a school where all the students in grades one to eight were Japanese American. The white children attended a school to the west on Florin Road. This was Mary's first experience with a segregated setting. She graduated from eighth grade in 1929, and attended the integrated Elk Grove High School, graduating in 1933.

Mable Barron taught English public speaking and took a personal interest in Mary. Although Mary's oration deserved to be among the top nine oratorical contestants, the sponsors, the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, declared Mary ineligible based on her ancestry.

In 1933, with the encouragement of Mable Barron, Mary was entered an oratorical contest sponsored by the Japanese Students Club of Sacramento Junior College. She won locally, and won the contest sponsored by the University of California Japanese Students Club in Berkeley.

After Mary's graduation from high school, Mable Barron assisted her to attend the College of the Pacific in Stockton in 1933. Excruciating pain from arthritis prevented further schooling and graduation, and Mary returned home. In 1936, she married Alfred Iwao Tsukamoto, lived with his family and worked on the farm. She gave birth to Marielle Bliss Tsukamoto.

December 7, 1941, World War II began and Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. Evacuation and forced removal of all people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast was ordered.

With the turmoil of preparation for evacuation, the Florin chapter of the Japanese American Citizen's League [JACL] opened an office with Mary as executive secretary, to work with local and Federal authorities to get the necessary information to all the people. Newsletters were distributed and Mary personally delivered information for the people in need. She witnessed many heart-wrenching incidents of human tragedy.

The Tsukamoto and Dakuzaku families were interned in Fresno Assembly Center on May 29, 1942. and Jerome, Arkansas Relocation Center on October 18, 1942 after a five day train ride. While in the camps, Mary taught English to Issei in Fresno, was the USO Director, Chairperson of the Jerome YWCA, and chaperoned young women to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, to meet the soldiers in training for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Mary and Al left Jerome for Kalamazoo, Michigan on November 17, 1943 joining other family members who had relocated there. In July 1945, the family returned to the Tsukamoto farm in Florin which had been left in the care of their good friend Bob Fletcher.

Mary began her teaching career in 1949 on an emergency credential and in 1951, received her B.A. from Sacramento State College. She retired in 1976 after 26 years of teaching, and for five years, was director of Jan Ken Po Gakko, a summer cultural heritage program. A curriculum was developed to teach the children stories and activities of the Japanese American historical and cultural heritage.

Mary spoke passionately during the grassroots movement to obtain Redress for all peoples affected by Executive Order 9066. Constitutional violations were committed by the U.S. government's actions in the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. She testified before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians [CWRIC] and the House Judiciary Committee. She was among the witnesses attending the signing by President Reagan of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

Since 1984, Mary has exhibited at the Florin JACL Time of Remembrance programs, and exhibits and speaks for two weeks of presentations at the Elk Grove Unified School District Board Room during which she, members of the VFW Post, and other JACL members share their wartime experiences with classes of fifth grade students. In 1994, the Mary Tsukamoto Historical Collection was donated to the California State University, Sacramento Archives, beginning the Japanese American Archival Collection.

Mary and Elizabeth Pinkerton published their book, *"We the People: A Story of Internment in America,"* in 1987. Mary Tsukamoto Elementary School in the Elk Grove Unified School District was dedicated in 1996. In May 1997, Mary was named by the California State Senate as the Asian American in State History: A Notable Californian.

Mary Tsuruko Dakuzaku Tsukamoto continued to speak eloquently and passionately on the Japanese American internment experience, and the need to be vigilant to prevent such Constitutional violations. She was indeed a

Notable Californian and a Distinguished American!

INTRODUCTION
by Joanne Iritani
Interviewer and transcriber/editor

This Oral History interview of Mary Tsuruko Tsukamoto was conducted at the California State University, Sacramento Archives. A video camera and audio tape recorder were set up by student staff member, Anthony Martinez. The audio tape recorder was so noisy during the first session, it was decided not to use it during the following sessions.

There were four sessions of interviews, however, in reviewing the third session, it was found that the sound was not recorded. Therefore, the three sound recorded interviews were transcribed and given to Mary to be edited. Mary then decided a fuller story should be told, so she wrote additional materials which were transcribed and placed in the Appendix section of this book. This material is a combination of newly written materials and original edited transcriptions of the interview.

The transcripts of the three sound recorded sessions are presented in this book with the editing and deletions as indicated. Some deletions from the transcriptions are part of the Appendix containing the stories of Mary's mentors. Some information found in those sections of the Appendix may be duplication of the transcribed interview.

Newspaper articles are included in this book to give the reader further information on Mary. The *Sacramento Bee* article was published on December 26, 1997, and the obituary article on January 8, 1998 following her death on January 6, 1998.

For ease of transcribing, audio tapes were recorded from the original video tapes.

[Session 1, October 14, 1996]

[Begin Audio Tape 1, Side A]

IRITANI: I am Joanne Iritani of the Florin JACL. This is an Oral History of Mary Tsuruko Tsukamoto conducted at the CSUS Archives, using the audio and video equipment of the University. The date is October 14, 1996, and the time is 11:30 a.m. This is Session 1, Tape 1, Side A.

Now Mary, I would like to have you begin by telling us your very beginning.

TSUKAMOTO: Well, I was born in San Francisco in 1915. It was January 17th. My parents [father was Taro Chosei Dakuzaku, and mother was Kame Yoshinaga Dakuzaku] had come from Okinawa, both of them, and they were quite young. I was the second child born in the United States. My older sister [Haru Ruth] was born in 1913, and I was the second child born in 1915. I mentioned that I'm the second child here, but my oldest sister Masako was born in Okinawa, and my Dad had never seen her.

And here I speak about something--I'm 81 now--and I speak about something that happened years ago. You may

TSUKAMOTO: wonder why Masako was the one that felt she was rejected and lived alone with Grandmother [father's mother Ushi Yamashiro Dakuzaku] in Okinawa, and always felt a little jealous of the rest of us who were left growing up with Dad and Mom. [Masako confessed this on her first visit to the United States in 1957.] She never understood the hardship we endured as a poor immigrant farmer's family. Dad and Mom had all kinds of experiences. But, when I was born, Dad was one of the partners [of a business in San Francisco]. There were five young Okinawan men who were partners in a laundry business. And they called it Capital Laundry. It was right on Geary Street and this is where they had their business. They were very happy, because once in a while, the young men who labored in the fields up and down California, when their harvest season was over, or winter time came, many of the Okinawan young people who had come from Okinawa by themselves were lonely and always looked for friends who had come from Okinawa. So it was a logical place to gather, and of course, while visiting, they helped Dad and Uncle with their laundry business. [Father's elder brother, Choshin Dakuzaku, changed their last name to Oda, his wife's maiden name, after World War II.] Soon Dad realized he needed a cook for all these young people that came from Okinawa. These young people often

TSUKAMOTO: worked and chipped in and did their share in cooking, but Mom was called. My mother had been left with Grandmother [her mother-in-law] when Dad left. He was only 17 when he was forced to marry an "old lady." He rebelled because Grandma Dakuzaku [his mother] was determined that she wouldn't let. . . she only had two sons. And the older son had already gone to the United States. Now, the second son was going to leave because she had to make him leave before he was drafted. He was 17 and he was up for being drafted into the Japanese Army because of the Russo-Japanese War. Anticipating this, she decided that she would first see that he was married. Although he was 17, she needed to be sure that he would have a family that he would come back to. That he would be sure that she [Grandmother] wouldn't be left alone on this island. And so she was very bright and brilliant in her plan. She had been the daughter of a wonderful wet-nurse [to the Okinawan King's son, Prince Sho] in Okinawa. Now this is the photograph that shows Grandma Dakuzaku who became a very fine textile artist. She wove fabric from the *basho* [like a banana] plant that was growing in her yard. They had quite a large plantation there in front of her home. And they processed this *basho* plant which had fiber that was very strong and very light, and they wove silk-like

TSUKAMOTO: fabric that was very cool [and crisp] and thin, but never sticking to their body. Many people in Okinawa, who lived in the tropical, [humid] island, liked to wear *basho* fabric. Well, she was the well-known textile weaver for the Royal Family.

IRITANI: This is she, right?

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. And she was the one that, her ancestors. . . her Grandmother, [or my] Great Grandmother Shiroma, Gushikuma Shiroma, was the one that was the wet-nurse to the King's family, the second son when he was born. They sought a person, the right person with the fine character and family. She was selected to become the wet-nurse to the Royal Son. And she came to live in the Royal Palace. And so with her mother [Gushikuma Shiroma], Ushi Yamashiro came to live at the Royal Palace. From the age of five, she ran in and out of the palace gardens and then grew up and eventually married Choju Dakuzaku who was my Grandfather. So Grandmother Ushi Yamashiro and Choju Dakuzaku lived just outside of the Palace grounds where she raised *basho* plants and wove for the Royal Family. She came in and out bringing her woven beautiful fabric that was well-known throughout the island. She learned of my mother being a servant in the family in the Royal Home. And she decided that she was the one

TSUKAMOTO: that she would select for her daughter-in-law. My father rebelled because he was 17, and this "old lady" was 21. "She's too old for me!" And Grandmother was insistent. She had observed how loyal and faithful and hard-working and astute this Kame was, Kame Yoshinaga [Mary's mother]. And chose her to become her son's bride. And so, my mother often described the wonderful, elaborate wedding ceremony that was conducted from the Palace where she was given away to the Dakuzaku family. And she was married, given many, many beautiful fabrics and clothes and material gifts that showed that they appreciated her life-time of service to the Royal Family. She [my mother Kame] had come to live in the Royal Family household when she was five years old. And that's a long, long story of how she ended up becoming a part of the serving household. She was at first a playmate to the Royal children, and as she grew older, she learned other responsibilities and learned to serve the Royal Family members. [My mother's father, Satonoshi Yoshinaga, was a Court Musician for the Royal family who played koto, flute and many instruments. He was a sumo player [wrestling], was injured and died when Kame and her sister Tsuru were young. The wicked uncles, brothers of the deceased Grandfather, drove Grandmother Yoshinaga and her two

children out of their home. But a distant relative, the King's Concubine, heard about the tragedy and offered a place for Kame in the palace.]*

IRITANI: And that was your mother you're referring to.

TSUKAMOTO: That was my mother Kame.

IRITANI: And she is here. . .

TSUKAMOTO: And she is there pictured with Grandmother Ushi Yamashiro [Dakuzaku], and the Great, Grandmother Gushikuma Shiroma who was the wet-nurse to the Royal Prince. And so, that is the earliest photograph we have of my mother with Masako, her first child on her lap. That was Masako when she was just a little baby. And for that reason, Grandmother [Ushi Dakuzaku] was very wise in choosing my mother and being sure that Dad would have a family. So Dad rushed to leave Okinawa and never saw his daughter born. [In 1906], when he came to the United States, he was caught in the terrible San Francisco earthquake a month after he arrived. That early morning, he ran out of the room and left his suitcase and lost everything he had, including his passport. And the rest of his life in the United States, he anguished over the fact that he lost those precious papers. But when he finally

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

TSUKAMOTO: walked and ran and rushed out of the Bay Area with the mass of people leaving San Francisco that was burning, he finally arrived in Florin. And he said that the letter had caught up with him, and that he had learned that he was a father. Masako was born and he had learned the news when he came to Florin. So he was a father. A young man. But he knew that his wife was in Okinawa with his mother and the daughter. But in 1911, when they were busy with their laundry business--and I wished that I had a picture of that, the laundry business,--then finally, my father decided that he'd better have a cook. And he called for my mother to come to the United States, and of course, expected his daughter to come with her. And my mother didn't realize what an anguished experience that would be. When she tried to speak to her Mother-in-law and insisted that the family needed to come together, Grandmother would not listen. She had been widowed a year or two before that--her ailing husband passed away--and so Grandfather had died and Grandmother would be left alone. And so, she hung on to Masako, and my mother said she just couldn't take her away from Grandmother, and she cried and cried and tried to explain to Masako that she would come back. But Masako cried and wanted to go with her, and she said that was the saddest experience of her life. That never left her.

TSUKAMOTO: Every once in a while, when I'd come home from school, I'd find her crying. She'd tell me about the letter that had come from Masako and how lonely she was for her mother, and wanted to come to America. And so my father was very sad that Masako was sacrificed and she had to remain in Okinawa. But my mother struggled to learn to be a cook in America. Of course, they all decided she'd better get there, hurry up and learn how to cook by going into an American home and have a lady teach her a lot more about how they did their things in homes in America. My mother said they called her Mary, and she learned quite a few things. She learned to cook. But much of the biggest cooking lesson came from Dad. I didn't realize Dad had been a cook. He had a few years' experience of being a cook for the S.P. Railroad gang. And of course, whoever taught him how to cook for the gang must have been a rough cook. But anyway, I was surprised when he was baking bread, he mixed flour dough, and sugar, and butter and milk in without measuring everything, and stirred it up with his arm, and made bread. And my mother learned how to cook bread and biscuits and cookies and things like that from my Father. And so this is the way I saw Dad teach Mom how to roast turkey and things like that. Mom finally learned to be a pretty good cook in her lifetime. That's how

TSUKAMOTO: it started. So she was busy working in San Francisco, cooking for these gangs of people. . . . Now this was before my Mother came to America, but you see in this photograph, the young Prince--this nice-looking young man in a formal outfit next to the light suited fellow who was his aide--stopped by to visit the Okinawan young people, because they were lonely as they traveled away from Okinawa. And they wanted to visit and see everybody so they gave him a party as he was on his way to study in the East. I don't remember if it was Harvard or some big University he attended. But, there were reasons to gather, and they were very happy that they could have parties like that, because they missed Okinawa. They missed their families. And this is how they existed. So we have quite a few pictures of their early years in America. Like when my Auntie [Nobuko Oda Dakuzaku] and Uncle. . . . Uncle decided he'd go back to Japan and get him a bride. And this was after I was born. But this is the first picture. I think I was not quite two, when Auntie and Uncle came back from Okinawa with their happy hopes of building a home and having a family. And so Dad and Mom were very pleased to greet them, because Uncle and Dad were close friends. And Uncle was very appreciative of what Dad had been doing sacrificing Masako and having the responsibility of

taking care of Grandma. There were often reasons to have parties, and so you can see this picture of when my Father and my Uncle were happily giving a party to welcome the new bride, Auntie. And so Ruth and I, or Haru and Tsuru, were sitting with Mom, and this party picture was taken. There were quite a few old pictures that we see show. . .

IRITANI: Would you talk about the picture on the wall, too. [A picture of Abraham Lincoln]

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, I started to tell about Dad. . . other reasons he sacrificed himself was, Dad never got to finish school. He was in the fourth grade when he read about Abraham Lincoln. He said that when he read the story of Abraham Lincoln who grew up a poor boy in a log cabin, and he ended up becoming the President of the United States, he said, "That's the kind of country I want to go to. I want Lincoln's America to be my country, too." You see the picture of Lincoln hanging on the wall. . . I think Dad always wanted to be sure that people would know he admired Abraham Lincoln, and that's why he was in the United States. But his dreams and his hopes took a long, long time to come about. Uncle, and Auntie, and my Dad and Mom knew that there were ruffians that were calling them names and throwing rocks at them. He found out that his America was going to be a little different than Lincoln's America,

TSUKAMOTO: because they called them "Japs". There were people. . . even the laundry organization, I just recently found out, had organized an anti-oriental laundry group. They tried to advertise, "Don't do business with the Asians and Japanese that are washing your clothes." And they tried to let them know that they were not clean. And Dad, during the World War I when there was an influenza epidemic, and he realized that these sheets might have all these germs of influenza, his children were growing up--he had by then three children--he said, "Maybe this laundry business isn't good for us. It's not very clean." And of course, in those days, I guess, they had no way of disinfecting material, so Dad and Uncle and the other partners, all talked it over, and decided it wasn't worth all the trouble that they went through, working as hard as they did. . . . You could see my sister and I in front of the counter, and behind the counter, much of the work of figuring out how much profit they were making, selling and wrapping the sheets and things that they washed for everybody. Anyway, Mr. Yoshizato whose hobby was cameras and photographs, took a lot of our pictures. Ruth and I got photographed a lot. But that's when Dad and the partnership decided they would break up and go on our own and do other things. So 1918-1919, Pop and Uncle and all of their partners separated and they left

TSUKAMOTO: for different parts of California to make their own life. And Dad ended up deciding to go to Turlock, of all places, to farm. He was going to try melon farming. And Uncle said, "Well, he's going to try being a domestic, and cook and iron, and wash clothes for a family." And so Auntie went to sewing school until her children were born. My Father was not as educated as Uncle, but he [Dad] had been so loyal to support his mother that Uncle never forgot that he worked hard that to quit school at fourth grade to work so that the family could make a living. And he used to carry great, big wine barrels on a sled and a horse to deliver this wine to different places in Japan. And Father worked as a fourth grader or fifth grader, he was working that way to support the family, so that Uncle could go ahead and finish going to high school. And Uncle realized that he had a better advantage of education because my Father sacrificed his life to help him. So when Uncle and Auntie had a chance to help, they offered to help his brother's family. They knew that the city offered better advantages like nursery school and education. So that's when they offered to help take care of Ruth and me to stay in San Francisco and live with Uncle and Auntie and go to the nursery school because where Dad was going to, Turlock wouldn't

TSUKAMOTO: have nursery school. So they'd take Isabel, or Sumi, who was the only baby then, and they went to Turlock to farm.

But, before that happened--I'm back-tracking--but I remember when I was two, my sister was four, and she was busy running around on the street, and ran across the street to play with friends across the way. The street car was coming down Geary Street--it was downhill. And it was coming down, but I was just watching my sister go across the street, and I just knew I wanted to go there. too. So I started to slowly walk over across the street, and the street car couldn't stop down the hill, so it kept on going, clanging and clanging, but kept going down. And soon everybody made a lot of racket, and was shouting and screaming and they heard a baby cry and they ran around looking under the street car. Mom said, "*Tsuru chan ja nai ka!*" She wondered if it was Tsuru, and she found out there was a child crying, and somebody said, "It was my child. I ran around looking for blood and nothing was visible" but she ran around and around. And soon somebody said, "Oh, she's caught here." And they got me out of the cow-catcher net. That was the first time I learned that street cars have cow catchers. And I was caught in it! Luckily, not even my toe or my foot or any part of me was bruised or cut or torn. I remember riding with my Uncle and my Mother in the

TSUKAMOTO: old car--it was an open car with no top and no sides--and we hurried down the street. I remember Uncle and Mom had a white apron on and I was sitting between them. Uncle kept looking at me and said there's not even a drop of blood on me, and they couldn't believe it. They rushed me to the emergency hospital and the doctor examined me and he said, "Gee, lucky baby." I had no bruises and there was nothing wrong with me. He gave me a stick candy. I remember that strange stick candy, it was square. And it looked black. But it was green flavored. And I told Mom about that and she didn't remember it. But, I remember getting that stick candy. And then I also remember seeing the gurneys with the men all bandaged up. Some of them had no feet and their legs were bandaged with blood showing. The year was 1917. And I remember as years later I recalled, those must have been the veterans who were coming back from World War I. Wounded veterans. And they were at this hospital. But anyway, this was an experience that excited the missionary ladies that were holding a nursery school in the Reformed Church. They realized that two kids were not being supervised by their parents who were busy with the business. So they came over to offer to take Ruth and me to the nursery school

TSUKAMOTO: every day. They would walk over and come and get us. And take care of us for a few hours at a time. So my Mother prepared diapers in the lunch box, and prepared me to go with [Haru] Ruth to school. I was so proud that I could go to a nursery school. And that's when we first heard about "Jesus Loves Me", and they taught me to pray at night, go to bed and pray to Jesus. And I'd come home and talk about these things. And it impressed Dad and Mom. They had never known anything about Christianity. And here these nursery teachers would teach the children things that they never heard about. Uncle and my Dad and Auntie and my Mother were very impressed. This is because it's America and this is America's religion. They had not been religious in Okinawa, not even Buddhism. But it was a very lucky step into the churches. And I'm very grateful. I often wondered if I'm living on borrowed time. But it was certainly God's blessing that I was caught in a cow catcher, and they heard about us at the nursery school because of the big, I guess, accident. And so it was a fortunate lesson because ever since then, every town and city we moved to Auntie and Uncle and my Dad and Mom saw to it that there was a Japanese Church that we could attend and even Japanese language school. And so this is what happened in our lifetime. And I shall always be

TSUKAMOTO: deeply grateful for that beginning of becoming a Christian in America. But this is part of the story of Dad's Lincoln's America and his great dream. But he kept forever being disappointed. In Turlock, he worked hard and without knowing how to read or write English and write contracts, they verbally agreed [with] the Gerrard Company. I don't know what they said, and every other word that Dad knew was "God damn" and "Shit". With all these English words, he thought he was learning English [laughter], and we used to look at each other, Ruth and I, but we didn't tell him those were bad words. But, later he found out they weren't really good words to know, but Dad thought he was speaking English. And I wonder what he talked about. But anyway, he said they had verbally agreed to take the crop and at the end of the season they would be paid for the things they sell. He worked hard all harvest season, and shipped the melons, and at the end of the year, they had nothing. They owed the Gerrard Company more money than the Gerrard Company could give the farmers anything. And then there was a time when the vigilantes got busy and [threatened fifty four] laborers that came to Turlock, to stay in the cars. They told them never to come back! And these were the Japanese laborers that labored up and down the valley and finished Imperial Valley, finished

TSUKAMOTO: harvesting crops down Fresno, came to Turlock around August to harvest cantaloupes. And they weren't allowed to get off the train and were told never to come back. So Dad and Uncle, I remember that time, I was in school, but I was always listening and sharp. And I heard them whispering. It must have been something they didn't want me to hear. They were whispering and they were very worried. "What shall we do?" you know. "The laborers aren't going to come." And years later, when I read Carey McWilliams' book, *Prejudice: Symbol of Intolerance*, I found about the Gerrard Company and the vigilantes that really hurt the Japanese and their crops that year, and I heard that Dad and Uncle were talking about that incident. But, anyway, there were many disappointments that Uncle and Auntie, and my Dad and Mom faced. And Uncle finally quit San Francisco and moved all of us back to Turlock. He was going to farm there. He decided that he'd try farming. Well, they lived together and farmed together in this Anderson house. It was a big house. And I remember Hide [son of Uncle and Auntie] was born there in this house. She had already two girls, [Shizu and Yeiko] and now she had the first son, born at our Anderson farmhouse. I remember I was staying with Auntie and sleeping at night in her bed because we had a lot of people

TSUKAMOTO: to sleep in the house. And we managed to squeeze in. Auntie would teach me Japanese folk songs. She had been a teacher in Okinawa. She was a wonderful influence on me. And so she would remind me of the things I had learned at nursery school and also to pray. [She'd] teach me the songs that I'd forgotten. And so, I remember the happy association and respect and bond I developed.

[End Audio Tape 1, Side A, Session 1]

[Begin Audio Tape 1, Side B, Session 1]

TSUKAMOTO: She was like a second mother because she sensed what a child should be taught. Mother was oblivious of all that. She had too much work to do--cook and run out on the farm, and run around with the shovel and irrigate the farm and the sandy soil broke and the ditches broke and the water would just run wild. And they had to buy irrigation water from a ditch that the irrigation system sold so much water. And if they let it run wild and it doesn't come into the ditches, they lose money. So Dad was upset and he was blaming Mom and they were running around with shovels. He was trying to hit her. I couldn't believe that, but I remember these things. I don't think Mom and Dad remembered that. I recall that. [Laughter]

IRITANI: How old were you about then?

They were so worried that they couldn't help it. Their life was so difficult.

IRITANI: So how old were you?

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, I must have been about five or six--nearly ready to go to school. Or I might have been in the first grade. But anyway. [Haru] Ruth started to go to school first. They had to walk about five miles to go to Tegner Grammar School. And so she'd walk home from the field and drop a great big watermelon on the field and break open the center of the watermelon and eat it. She'd bring the fish that was nearly dead from the canal and put it in our lunch box and bring it home. I thought that was wonderful she could do all those things in school or on the way to school and home. I remember waiting for her to come home when she went to school first. And I could hardly wait for my turn. Anyway, we walked to school and had about eight or ten of us walk together, steal apples and do all kinds of things on the way and back. Oooh gosh, if Dad ever heard what we were doing--[laughter]. But anyway, I have recollections and memories of things like that.

But other things that I remember. Mrs. Thompson was the principal of the school. She always stood by the bell on the stairs of the school, Tegner Grammar School, and said, "Here come the Japs." You know a whole bunch of us.

TSUKAMOTO: I will never forget that. Maybe she never knew that it was a bad word, but I never will forget. I liked her, but I thought, "Gee, that's not what I want to hear from her." That's the way some of the teachers were, too. So, they reflected feelings the people had in those years and that's the kind of school we went to.

And so with Dad's hardship and life and unfairness of this and that, but Uncle finally decided to become a farmer! And they found a farm a few miles away from our place. And they had apricot trees and lot of other things and this nice, big house and farm. We went over there and got acquainted with the farm work that they were doing.

There was an invasion of cutworms. We never knew what a cutworm was--it was a black and yellow striped worm with a little pointed horn or something on the front end of it. Auntie and Uncle got so upset and frantic, they called us to help. So Pop said, "You go." You know, he told Ruth and me, "You're old enough to go and help, so we went. And there Auntie was carrying a can of kerosene. She gave us a can of kerosene and chopsticks. She was picking these worms with a chopstick into this can of kerosene. Up and down the cantaloupe plants. [Laughter] And I thought, "My gosh, how can you ever catch up with something like that. Hundreds and hundreds

TSUKAMOTO: of worms all over the place and you were working around with the chopsticks trying to put the worms in the kerosene?" But, that's what we did. And Uncle said, "*Mo dame.*" [It's no use.] He said this is not a good way to live. He was there for a couple of years, though. But he decided when he had a chance. . . . a friend came from Fresno, and he said, "I own a boarding house in Fresno. But I'm not well and I've got to go to Okinawa to see my family, so I want you to buy my house." And Uncle thought that was a good idea so he goes over to look at it and decides that he would move there and live there. So Auntie had--Hide was born, and now she was expecting the next boy, the next child. And she was big. And I remember she got on the old Ford. And that's another thing. Dad and Uncle got together and bought an old Ford, I mean a new Ford. [inaudible] together. And you should see [Laughter] the fun we had observing them learning to drive. "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa *yutte mo* , it won't stop." [Laughter] They laughed afterwards. They said, "*Whoa yutte mo tomarazu.*" [Even if I said, 'Whoa', it wouldn't stop.] They were stepping on the gas and they didn't know how to stop it. Well, it ran right into the wall of our house and it made a mark. You know, the radiator and the crank made a hole in the wall. And we can still hear the loud crash. The house wall was

TSUKAMOTO: leaning. Uncle and Pop practiced driving. I don't know what the arrangement was between them, but anyway, Uncle and Dad bought the car together. Uncle loaded his family's belongings on this Ford and piled all of our earthly possessions that we must take, and needed, and [Haru] Ruth and I were invited to go with them because the city schools are better than the country schools. And so, Auntie and Uncle, with Hide in the middle and Obasan [Auntie] big and expecting a baby in the front and then Ruth and I and Shizu and Yeiko in the back seat with all the suitcases and things on top of the car and in back and tied up all over the place. That's how we went to Fresno. [Laughter] I was about in the third grade and [Haru] Ruth was fourth or fifth grade. Two years ahead of me. And we left [Sumi] Isabel and [Yoshiko] Jean with Dad and Mom, and they moved to another place to farm for a few years while we went to Fresno. And this was a new adventure for us to live in the city again that we were aware of. We walked to Lincoln Grammar School and my sister [Haru] Ruth went to Edison Middle School. It was a great big school. And I remember Miss Townsend was a wonderful teacher. So we did enjoy and appreciate the new schools and we walked over to the hospitality center on Saturdays and a Friendship Club was organized for the Girl Reserve group, you know. And the leaders were the

TSUKAMOTO: [Japanese] Congregational Church's older girls who were advisors to our club. And they taught us how to make jello. *Hajimete* [For the first time] we tasted Jello. And they did things like that. We had club activities--learned songs and they took us to the library, and we learned the advantages of having a library where you can borrow books free with a card. And so, Auntie and Uncle were very happy we were busy going to the library, reading and doing activities like that, besides helping.

I remember piles of clothes that I would water--sprinkled so that we could iron them. [Laughter] That was our job. Wash clothes and iron, and sprinkle clothes and. . . Auntie and Uncle were very busy. Uncle was always busy trying to remodel and clean and keep the hotel building looking nice. Often plastering, painting, and fixing the rooms upstairs, and making beds in the boarding house, you know, so when the room got empty, you have to clean it and make beds. And then when somebody was sick, we had to take trays up to feed them, and things like that. So, once in a while, we'd have to do that, too, when somebody was sick in bed. Like these boys from the country come in to stay at this boarding house, especially when they are sick. They didn't have a family, so they stayed there. So Auntie would have to make *misoshiru* [miso soup], and things like

TSUKAMOTO: that to feed them. But Auntie was busy cooking and she often sent me to get *tofu*.. I remember one *tofu* was ten cents, *ka ne?* [perhaps]. Gee, she'd make a great, big pot of *okazu* [mixed meat and vegetables] with *tofu* and I don't know what else. *Togan* [a white gourd-melon] *kitte* [cut] and meat and she'd make *okazu* [a pot of tasty food] and sell it for 10 cents a dish. And each person that sat at this boarding house table, paid 2 cents for their milk. [Laughter] Cheap! Rice, and *okazu* and tea. I just wonder how she made anything. And *tsukemono* [pickled vegetables] they had to raise. Well, once in a while Uncle would be busy driving them [the men] to a new job. Bringing them back when their work was over. And helping them find new jobs, that was Uncle's job, too. And then, when he goes some place, somebody would sell him some. . . oh, he came home happy. This great, big, round gunny sack was wrapped. And he'd come happily into the house. And Auntie would look at him and frown. And he'd go down the basement and down halfway down the basement, there was a place, a partition between the wall and the plaster board and another wall. There was a rope there. He hauled this great big five gallon bottle, and then he'd take a little glass cup like this, and go down in there and pour this liquid into the cup. Bring it and place it before his guest

TSUKAMOTO: who'd paid 10 cents. And it was a special drink. And Auntie knew that they had prohibition at this date. It was against the law. She didn't want him to violate the law and get into trouble. But Uncle enjoyed that. He loved to drink, too. So he was happy he could do that. [Laughter] But I used to watch all that. And I don't know whether Auntie remembered anything like that, but I told Shizu and Yeiko, and I don't know whether they remembered, but I knew what they were doing. [Laughter]

One day, Uncle got a suitcase full of something somebody came to sell him at a cheap price. And Auntie opened it. It was full of bottles. And Auntie said, "*Donna ni yasukutemo, konna mono katta ra ikenai.*" [No matter how inexpensive, it is not good to buy these things.] And Uncle kept arguing with her, and then she [Auntie] noticed there was a policeman across the street, watching. She said, "*Junsa ga soko ni kiteru ja nai no.*" [The police man has come right there.] And she said we're going to get arrested. But Uncle said, "*Dai jobu yo.*" [It's all right.] He wanted to keep it and sell it and Auntie finally. . . . I was busy ironing outside on the porch, that's where we had the ironing board. I was watching. Then she finally got an ice pick and put all the bottles in the sink, and she broke all the bottles with the ice pick, and I smelled it. I ran in there and

I told *Obasan* [Auntie], "*Zui bun niyou ne?*" [It certainly smells a lot, doesn't it?]

IRITANI: [Laughter]

TSUKAMOTO: And I should say the cop would smell it and come running. But, anyway, I remember. They had a hard time trying to make money, and trying to make a go of it. And sending us to church. We found the [Japanese] Methodist Church way behind the block on the other side of the Buddhist Church. There was a great, big Buddhist Church with a big language school, after public school. But this Methodist Church didn't have a church school, nor did they have enough people to have a Sunday School. But Arima Sensei and his family had three or four kids. They said, "Our family and your children *dake demo* [only] we could start Sunday School." So they said they would. . . so for a while, about a year, we went there. But there were times when there weren't many people in there. Things weren't very active. Then we had friends that went to a very big [Japanese] Congregational Church up the hill. And they had a lot of people going to Sunday School, and the college students, Nisei who were college age, were teaching Sunday School, and helping as leaders, song leaders, and all kinds of things, so it was fun. So we went there and they also had a nice, big Japanese language School. They had several teachers

TSUKAMOTO: teaching it. So we went to that school, and I got pretty good Japanese language training that year going to this Congregational Japanese language school. And I remember we had an end-of-school program, you know. And I was the crab and we did the Monkey and the Crab story in song. We learned the song. It was like an operetta. And I remember taking the lead and singing. They all thought that was wonderful. I never forgot that experience, you know. Having had that kind of experience in Fresno for a few years. But, it's amazing how much you experience in a few years at a very crucial time in your life. A child is more teachable at certain ages. And that is between eight and ten—a very impressionable age. And I thought how important that was for children. But anyway, finally Dad quit Turlock and went to Parlier where he decided to farm with peaches one year.

IRITANI: I must turn this over. Do you need water, Mary?

[Interruption to turn audio tape over. We audio taped the first session, but did not use it in transcribing this narrative.]

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. Then my mother was expecting.

IRITANI: Give it a chance to start [while you] drink the water.

TSUKAMOTO: My mother was expecting. She had another child in Turlock. Toshi.

- IRITANI: Right now, there's [Haru] Ruth and you, and [Sumi] Isabel was born in. . .
- TSUKAMOTO: Isabel eventually came and joined us in Fresno.
- IRITANI: She was born in. . .
- TSUKAMOTO: Isabel was born in San Francisco [in 1917], but [Yoshiko] Jean and [Toshiko] Julia were born in Turlock. And Julia was the last one born, so now there were six girls, including Masa *nesan* [eldest sister]. And no boys. Dad kept wondering if he'd ever be a father to a son. Well, in Parlier, Mom was expecting and we had a peach ranch. And that was quite an adventure. During the summer vacation we'd go and help. Oh, and we had on our heads! We had lice! And I remember Mom had to wash our long hair and *tsuki kushi de* [with the crescent-shaped comb] scraped and see the lice come on to it.
- IRITANI: [Laughter]
- TSUKAMOTO: And she'd try kerosene. Wash it with kerosene. Oh, I remember that summer. Well, anyway, eventually on July first, 1925, George was born. And it was such a big event. Dad gave a big party, and we had a lot of friends come. But anyway, that was the highlight of his life. Though he wasn't successful as a farmer. He does have a son, finally. And so, we go back to Fresno to finish school, go back to

school. But, in the meantime, a friend from Florin came.
Kishaba-san came.

IRITANI; What's the name?

TSUKAMOTO: Mr. Kishaba. And he comes with the truck. He owns a truck. And he tells Dad that Florin *dattara* never miss. [If you come to Florin] you'll make a good living. It's hard work, but, strawberries bring good money. So in 1925, Dad listens to him, and he decides that maybe that would be a good idea. He tried so many things, Turlock and cantaloupe, and Parlier peaches. He thought, well he'll listen and decides to go. This time the whole family was to go together. So we cried and cried and left Fresno in December [1925]. And I was ten when we moved. So we once again piled up our Ford with all kinds of things and this time we had a pickup to assist us. Mr. Kishaba's pickup. Put all the other things that we needed, which wasn't very much, but he took us and led us back to Florin. So that's how we came to Florin in 1925 when I was ten. There again Dad continued to have hardships in every farming venture.

But, the shock of his life in Lincoln's America was that Florin School had no other children but Japanese faces. And there were three Caucasian teachers teaching them. It wasn't the school in Japan, but a school in America with

TSUKAMOTO: the [American] flag flying and we learned things out of English books, so people kept saying was that a Japanese School? No, it wasn't. It was a public school with only children of Japanese ancestry attending this particular building. And then I found out a few weeks, days later, that across the street, about a mile or so west, there was a new building built in 1923. So that was two years before I came. And years later, I found out that the reason why they needed to do this was that there was a political reason to stir up hate and anti-Japanese feeling among the people who lived in Florin because there was such a concentration of Japanese Americans, so many Japanese stores and Japanese businesses.

There was a Gulick, Reverend Gulick who was a missionary and a professor at Doshisha University in Japan, who writes a book about Japanese in America. In 1914 it's published. And we just now got a hold of it. Now there again, Kay and Lucy Kishaba saw me at the Okinawa program at Hiram Johnson [High School in 1996] and gave me this book. I thought, oh gosh, Fuchigami was the name of the person who sent me the book. So I wrote him a thank you letter immediately, but he said, "No, I just wanted you to see it. I want that book back because I was lucky to find it in a secondhand store. It's out of print, but I

TSUKAMOTO: wanted you to see it." I was so delighted to see it, because there it tells the story of why *Sacramento Bee* was against the Japanese. And all the reports that went out of *The Bee* all over the United States was printed in words that were given to *The Bee* by a man named John Reese. John Reese was the only owner, a Caucasian owner of a mercantile store in Florin. Five or eight years before that, 1913, around 1905 and 1902, there were five or six Caucasian stores and businesses in Florin. And for some reason, they had quit and gone to other things. But John Reese tells *The Bee* and tells the legislators and vice presidents and governor and anybody that came to Florin to find out the Japanese Problem. He is the official guide. Takes them around and in his words, poisons the minds of the people saying, "It's because they couldn't stand the Japs, they quit. And look at them. They've taken over, the whole town." Well, the Japanese people needed fish, and they needed the things people that talked to them in Japanese instead of motioning and trying to buy eggs. . . they said they wrapped the kleenex or towel, white handkerchief and crowed like a cock to tell them when they wanted eggs. And they had a lot of funny stories we hear about Isseis trying to buy things, because they didn't know English. But now they had a Japanese store that sold plows and hoes and things they

TSUKAMOTO: need, farm implements as well as food and fish and meat. So these stores flourished. And John Reese kept telling people. . . the visitors. "Look at the hovels the Japs live in. They want to live like that." Well, they don't know the whole story, but with the [discrimination] atmosphere in the United States, many of them didn't rebuild or spend much money on the houses because they never knew when they'd have to quit and go back to Japan. But many of those who did spend some time and decided to live even though they were not so welcome, they built nice homes. And Mr. Gulick went around purposely to take pictures of families that built their own homes, the Japanese. And built nicer homes than even some of the *hakujins* [white folks'] homes. And he shows that in several chapters. And then he met a group of wonderful people who are respected like, *Ojiisan* respected Mr. Lansborough. He was a *Shinshi*.

IRITANI: He was a what?

TSUKAMOTO: They call it a *Shinshi*. *S-h-i-n. Shin* . And they're kind of spiritual, educated teachers. They called them *Shinshi* because they were respected highly! Well he was good to all the *Nihonjins*, Mr. Lansborough. And there was a Mr. Simon. He was fair and kind. There was the Thomas family. There was Rev. Buckner's family.

IRITANI: Let me go back to Lansborough. L-A-N-S. . .

TSUKAMOTO: B-O-R-O-U-G-H.

IRITANI: And Mr. Simon.

TSUKAMOTO: I can get you these things out of Dr. Gulick's book,^b Because I still borrowed it. I told him I wanted to have copies made out of it, and try to use it.

IRITANI: Actually, Georgiana [White, California State University, Sacramento Archivist] found that book upstairs, too.

TSUKAMOTO: She did? Oh, that's good. I won't have to worry about it then. Well, I wanted to make nice copies of certain pages, and try to expose why Florin had this segregation program. It was cooked up, and they did this because of one man, but also it was advantageous for the legislators to come in and stir this up with nation-wide publicity, because they wanted the people to vote to keep the Japanese out of the United States, the Exclusion Bill in 1924. So that's what they needed.

IRITANI: At the time that the school was moved, everything was already going along. Have you any idea about what year Mr. Reese was stirring problems?

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, it's about that time, because. . . . No, because the book was written in 1914. [The 1913 Alien Land Law was passed. In 1920 it was revised to exclude leasing as well as ownership of land by immigrants from Asia.] See, so it's

TSUKAMOTO: early. and it builds up. But, by the time they wanted to pass the 1924 Immigration Bill, by then they got to saying, "Well, the teachers surely must be having trouble, because these Japs come from homes where they don't speak English. So they must take longer to learn English." And one year--one year before that, every child up to fifth grade was held back. Now when you do that. . .

IRITANI: That was before segregation.

TSUKAMOTO: That was before segregation. They were held back. And the parents were shocked because they were working hard to get their children to study well, and they just couldn't stand the fact that they're not doing well in school. And they checked up, and they found out this is the reason they wanted. . . they can't learn as well, so we're going to build a separate school. They needed a reason to segregate them. And so they failed all the children up to fifth grade.

IRITANI: Have you any idea of what the percentage of white to Japanese were?

TSUKAMOTO: At that time.

IRITANI: At that time when it was segregated.

TSUKAMOTO; If I read Gulick's book, I might get some facts. But not before 1923, I wouldn't know. And no one knows who they were, at that time. I don't know if John Reese was still living, maybe he was. But who else maneuvered the

TSUKAMOTO: school board members, I don't know who they were.

Because in 1939, the strangest thing is. . . . I remember Al and I, because we were early JACL leaders--in 1935 our JACL was organized. By 1939, we were eager to do something to make a difference in this community. And we decided to integrate the schools and we went to the school board and the trustees. Nobody objected. Not even the teachers. No parents, nobody. If they did, we didn't hear about it. And we don't know whether they went underground. We didn't know whether they just swallowed their pride and kept quiet.

But it emerged again during the war when there were words that were spoken "that you can't trust them. They've got guns in their basement and they have short-wave radios they were using." All this came out when Al and I were working on the high school mural with Yoshio Taylor. '81,'82, we did our dedication. '85 we did our "Once-in-a-lifetime reunion". Not too long ago. '87 or '88 we built a mural for the high school and the year of discussion and trying to decide what Yoshio's design should be. I wanted up in the air someplace internment camp showing. And they [other members of the mural committee] said, "Well, it wasn't in Florin and we don't know anything about it. It never happened to us." But, I

TSUKAMOTO: said, "It was our history. It was our experience." I sure was crazy, but I was trying to get that in there. And I guess I was wrong, but Yoshio Taylor wisely said in an artist's design, he could use symbols and suggest, and not do too much. So, the main road of Florin became red, white, and blue, and then the blue part became 9066. And the flag was being trampled by the railroad, I mean the roads. And he said maybe that would be enough to. . . But it was right in the middle where the Buddhist Church was and the strawberries and grapes were. So that it suggested the Japanese families, they'd leave their strawberries and grapes. But that was all. We weren't going to have faces. We were going to have Japanese workers working in the field. We tried to keep it artistic. But that was as far as we got, but in the course of discussion, all these things came out.

[End Audio Tape 1, Side B, Session 1]

Begin Audio Tape 2, Side A, Session 1]

TSUKAMOTO: "Yeah, that wasn't our history. That's not. . . it didn't happen." But I said, "It did happen." And so, you know, we argued and Al said, "It's still there." Deep down inside, they were the great grandchildren and grandchildren of the very same adults that were talking about us. One of the fellows' grandfather was the sheriff and collected all our

pistols and guns. and Mr. Joichi Nitta's shotgun, it was a very expensive shotgun. And when he went back to get it after the war, he says, "I don't have it." And one of the sons says, "You know Dad, the one in our bedroom." And they went and got it. He was going to keep it. He was like that.

IRITANI: Well, do you want to go back to the actual farming that your father did in Florin? You have this lovely picture of when you were little. How are you doing? Are you tired?
(Photograph of children in overalls in the field.)

TSUKAMOTO: I remember we were shocked to find we had to wear overalls and spend much of our free time. . .

IRITANI: Oh. In Fresno you did not wear overalls because you were not farm children.

TSUKAMOTO: Finally we were wearing overalls and even George. So all of us were there. And this is a great picture because Ruth's in here. [It's about then, before Haru Ruth graduated Grammar School in 1927, the teacher and children all discussed their Japanese names and decided it best to adopt English names. Thus, Haru became Ruth. I was Mary always. Sumi became Isabel. Yoshiko became Jean. Toshiko became Julia, and of course, George was given his name at birth as I was.]* This was taken in '27 or '28 when

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

TSUKAMOTO: we worked hard to raise strawberries and planted grapes in between. The Japanese farmers couldn't own land, but they would lease a part of it or the owner would let the Japanese raise strawberries on the land providing they would plant grapes in between so that for three years we harvested strawberries. We'd leave grape vineyards there, so that when we moved to another section, there was a grape vineyard. A few acres of grapes. And that's how we eventually filled Mr. Jenkins'. . . William Jenkins' farm was filled with grape vineyards.

By then, we were all out of school [for the summer] and Dad was ready to buy the property next to him, 40 acres of it, and by then Ruth was old enough to buy it for Dad. She was the oldest one. That's why Dad insisted that she go to college. She went to University [of California] at Berkeley. And I used to think, "Gee, she's the only one that gets to go to college." Dad remembers what happened to him. And he sees that the eldest one who's going to take on this responsibility has to be the one to get a good education, so she would be worthy of being a landowner in his name. And so, that's how Dad ended up buying 40 acres adjoining Mr. Jenkins' farm. We lived on this side of the farm to transfer it into grape vineyards. And then we moved and built a new house on this side. And this

TSUKAMOTO: became the Dakuzaku property. And so, that 1929 Dad was so pleased.

I graduated [Florin] Grammar School and Ruth was in [Elk Grove] High School, so this is the picture that we took. And this shows our Dakuzaku family. Dad had worked hard from 1925 to 1929, and has learned that he could be a successful strawberry farmer and could feed his family and see that Ruth could get to college. Ruth is still in high school. But anyway, this is the year that I graduated grammar school, and then we went to San Francisco to Mr. Yoshizato who was [a longtime friend and] family photographer who took a lot of our family pictures. And this became part of our collection that we had taken of the entire family and finally with George there. The only person missing is Masako from Okinawa. But by then, 1929, Masako had gotten married in 1928. She now lived in Tokyo where her husband worked for a tobacco company. Inspector. So this is the story of my Dad.

These are the things that happened afterwards when I went to Elk Grove High School after having been in a grammar school where everybody was Japanese. We did terrible things like speak Japanese more than English at recess times. Among our friends, we'd speak Japanese. Teachers didn't like that. We weren't supposed to, but it

TSUKAMOTO: was easy to do it, because we just didn't care anymore. And when we went to high school, we felt very shy and frightened and felt that we needed to stay in the corner some place where we weren't noticed. Because we had gotten so used to being treated as second class. We almost felt like we were. and we just invited ourselves to be on the outside. And so even in the classroom, as much as I wanted to, I didn't discuss anything. I kept my mouth shut. I didn't raise my hand too much. And so we were going to school that way. But there were teachers, some of them didn't know how to treat us, because they weren't so used to knowing how we felt. They didn't quite understand what was the reason why we were so shy. And so, I know that some of the teachers acted like they didn't care for us. Maybe that wasn't true.

But there were some like Mable Barron who was so outgoing and smiling all the time, and bouncing up and down the hall, and she was chubby and short, and blue eyed and blonde lady teacher. She was such a wonderful English teacher. I had her in English. I decided. . .

IRITANI: Was that from your freshman year?

TSUKAMOTO: Yes.

IRITANI: You had her every year?

TSUKAMOTO: Well, I had her. . . this was the sophomore year that I could finally take public speaking. I'm allowed to take extra courses like. Freshman year I took all the requirements that I needed to take besides English and math and

TSUKAMOTO: homemaking. But, the sophomore year I had a little time to take something else, so I decided to take public speaking.

And I didn't dream that I'd be forced to stand up in front of the class and make impromptu speeches and pantomime and things like that. I was scared stiff! But because it was an assignment, I did it. And then I found out by spring, that every year Mable Barron agreed that the Native Sons and Daughters Annual Oratorical Contest, her public speaking classes were eligible to try out. So she made the big assignment that everybody in the class was to write an oration on California history. So I got busy. We all got busy. And she taught us how to write one and be sure that the oration had a theme. And then she talked about how to deliver it, and how to make a winning oration and all of this, she taught.

But finally, after we had tried out, then the P. A. [public address] system called, "Mary Tsukamoto, come here. Dakuzaku, come to the office." Then Mable Barron was there, and Mr. Wells the principal was there. And he looked so serious. I was scared. I wondered what

TSUKAMOTO: happened. Then Mable started to say she was so upset that the schools would discriminate. And Mr. Wells said, "It's really not our doing. It's the Native Sons and Daughters who are in charge of this annual oratorical contest, with a silver cup being perpetually given to the winning orator." So he said, "It's not our doing. It's out of our hands." But she said, "The school shouldn't be involved in such discrimination." And then they told me that I was one of the nine [contestants], but I was rejected because my parents were not native Daughters of the Golden West. Well, I said, "Oh, that's great. I'm glad I don't have to give an oration in front of the people on the stage. I'm glad I'm through with that assignment." And I walked out. I said, "I don't care. It's all right." You know. But it wasn't okay. It wasn't all right. Because then my body reacted to it. And I was soon whispering and not laughing any more, and the teachers were wondering what happened to her. "She's changed so much. She's not smiling or laughing or bouncing around like she did before." So soon, Mable realized that I needed to have a victory of some kind. But fortunately at that time in our life, the Florin [Japanese Methodist Church Epworth League] got invitations from the Sacramento Japanese Student Club. They were sponsoring an oratorical contest. Of all things at that time.

IRITANI: The University of California?

TSUKAMOTO: Well, first it was the Japanese Students' Club of Sacramento [Junior College].

IRITANI: Oh, the Sacramento Club.

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, yeah. And Henry Taketa was the chairman. And he said they wanted us to write on "Is higher education justifiable?" He had his mother cook us a roast beef dinner and all of us contestants had dinner at his house and went to the Lincoln Grammar School and gave our oration. And I won an electric clock that time. Well, Mable was happy.

IRITANI: You won a what?

TSUKAMOTO: Electric clock.

IRITANI: Clock. Oh-h-h.

TSUKAMOTO: Clock. Yes. That was the award. And so I was glad that I could be a winner. But then the University of California at Berkeley [Japanese Students' Club], the following year, 1933, I got invited. Florin [Epworth League] decided that I should be the one to enter that one. And that was the one "What can we leave for the next generation?" And I thought, "Oh, my gosh. What would a senior in high school know anything about the next generation?" And Mable sat me down. She knew. She knew what my father and mother had dreamed about and worked so hard and they wanted us to become good Japanese Americans. And I was ashamed

TSUKAMOTO: of them. I didn't want to have anything to do with Japanese culture and their goals. And here she was writing these [positive] words. And she was writing words about how important it was that we become great, good Americans. That we'd be loyal, patriotic persons. That we would care about religious values, spiritual values. And understand the concerns and goals of great American people, [and to be the bridge between Japanese cultural values and American values.] And so, she made me memorize those words, and I grew up believing in it eventually. I never. . . you know when you memorize and make a speech, and you can tell from the orations that I did, and Mable wrote those words and made me say them. And she taught me how to deliver them. And so I won the silver cup in San Francisco. It was in April.

IRITANI: And here is the cup, Mary with the cup. The cup is now here at the University [at Sacramento].

TSUKAMOTO: [Laughter] Well, anyway I came home with that silver cup on a train by my self because it was springtime and Dad and Mom and everybody was busy in the strawberries and nobody could go with me.

IRITANI: And you had never been on the train before.

TSUKAMOTO: Train. [Laughter] And then I went to Uncle's place in Oakland. Stayed with them and then the whole family

TSUKAMOTO: went with me on the ferryboat to San Francisco. Uncle was working in a domestic home where he was ironing. So he ironed my dress again and then we all went together. He was so proud. I know because, when I lived in Fresno, Uncle and Auntie were educated and knew. "*Konban wa hanashikai surun datte.*" [Tonight we shall have speaking practice.] They'd get out on the porch and they'd sit down and face us. "Now you stand right there and face us and tell us something." And we practiced orating, talking. And I remember I said, "Ojisan, do you remember you said we were going to have a *hanashikai*? And you made us get up in front and talk?" And I never dreamed then that I'd end up becoming a speaker. But I had a lot of influences and inspirations that came from the ones that were my mentors.

IRITANI: This is a long dress.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. It was black. . . In those days. . . Somewhere there is, you know that album you have my old oration you see the bottom of it, but the photographer came to see me the next day. Haruo Imura, I guess was his name.

IRITANI: Oh, I know Haruo.

TSUKAMOTO: He wanted to take my picture and so I stood there with my silver cup, but I don't think he showed my feet, but it was a long dress. And it wasn't the dress that I wore for my

oration. For my oration, I had a special dress. . . a lavender dress that somebody made for me. I've forgotten. Anyway it was a white blouse, and it was a nice dress. But this black dress was what I wore when I traveled and so Uncle took that picture with me wearing that black dress on Sunday.

IRITANI: Do you remember very much about that contest when you were there actually giving it? Were there a lot of the students? U.C. [University of California] students?

TSUKAMOTO: Well, I remember the contestants that sat with me. One of them was Mineta. And I don't know whether it was Etsu or whether it was Helen. But I sat with her and she was from San Jose. But I don't remember if I ever mentioned it to Etsu, but I wondered if it was Helen. I don't have the program anyplace now. . .

IRITANI: I was looking at the cup. It has your name first. The second place winner was Suzuki? Do you remember him?

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. He was a singer.

IRITANI: He was, and I'm sure people who see this tape will remember Jack Soo played Yamane on "Barney Miller" [television series]. That was him.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. *Honto ne?* That's right. He became a movie actor.

IRITANI: And then your third place winner was also from Florin.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. [Mas] Yamasaki.

IRITANI: Yamasaki. Very good.

TSUKAMOTO: That means they won the following years, not the third place. See this was the perpetual trophy. See, that's how come we got to keep it, because Mas didn't want it. And he's the one that brought it to Florin. He was the winner the third year. Goro got it the second year after I did. I don't remember who else was in that oratorical contest, but I can't remember. I don't have the program copy, I don't think they even had printed programs in those days. But anyway, I remember delivering it. Mable made me even dramatize it, you know. And she described an ideal Nisei that stands tall and handsome, and knows where he's going, and confident of his future. So, I described that. And so I think that Mable in writing something like this sure did feel some things that I could never describe, that it affected me in such a way.

Well, anyway, after doing that, I graduated Elk Grove [High School]. And this is the picture that got into *The Elk*, the annual [the school yearbook] *Elk*. And the reason why I got that picture is because they established the Hall of Fame for Elk Grove graduates. They used that picture. The graduates that were selected have a picture like that mounted. And so, I don't know what year it was, eight or ten years ago, I was elected as one of the Hall of Fame original founders [inaudible]. It included Kay Albani and

TSUKAMOTO: some of the other people from Florin. And then John Marshall was one of them the following year. So they've had it for several years. Bill Hewitt was in charge of it. So we had this experience.

And then I don't have pictures here of the College of the Pacific, but it was Mable. Her influence is very hard to even describe, but she was a high school teacher. And a drama teacher, and public speaking and English teacher. And she had two kids and her husband was a postman, mail delivery man, and he had problems with alcohol and Mable was very worried. And she had two girls she was raising. So she wasn't well off. She worked hard and I remember she even borrowed a truck to move furniture from her house to use for the stage props. They needed a living room furniture and she used her own. She was like that. Well, she was such a great social worker and cared about students that were having trouble. And soon she ran into opposition and she had to quit [teaching] school in Elk Grove. So for a few years, her family in Utah had an apron business, so she was selling aprons, all around New York and all over. And I thought, "Gee, a wonderful teacher like that doing business." But she was good at that. She even had people living in her attic. She had turned that into a sewing room and they had great big cutters, you know, that

TSUKAMOTO: cut this thick layer of cloth, aprons, all at one time. Oh my gosh. Anyway Mable was involved in that for a few years. But she goes back to teaching around Lodi and then before long, she ends up being the principal of that school. Before long, that school district grew and grew and so she ended up being the superintendent of the Lincoln Elementary School next to Stockton. And then finally, she was given honors when she retired. I remember going to her retirement. She was honored with a school named for her. So there's a Mable Barron Elementary School in Lincoln School District, near Stockton. But that's the kind of person she was. Such a caring and really consecrated.

She went and got old clothes from her friends. And she decided that Dad couldn't afford during the depression, 1933 was the worst depression year that even strawberry crates we were selling, double crates, and it wasn't even the price of one crate with twelve baskets, and we couldn't sell them. So Dad was having a tough time. But Ruth continued to work part time and went to college. Mable Barron was determined to get me to college. Of all things. And of all things, get me to College of the Pacific where she went. And that's a private school and it's so expensive, [\$600 a semester and \$1200 a year]. Where am I going to get that kind of money? Well, Mable ran back and forth to

TSUKAMOTO: Tully Knoles, the President of the University. She went back and forth, I don't know how many times. Finally, he consented to listen to her and gave me a \$150 beginning scholarship. She came home tooting the horn. It was summer in July, 1933. She said, "I got the scholarship, Mary! I got the scholarship. Tully's going to give you \$150." Well, then she goes in to talk to Dad and asked Dad to let me go. She says she knew that I was needed at home to work on the farm to help the family. But she said that I'll be responsible for Mary if you would let me take her and be sure that you would approve of sending her to college. Dad had tears as he remembered Lincoln's America, and knew that maybe Mable and knowing her and what she did to develop an orator out of me was worth sending me to college was more than he could even say. But he expressed agreement and appreciation. And she said, "I've found another teacher willing to give you \$10 a month for spending money. And I have a pile of clothes and I will sew her a wardrobe of five outfits." Sewed me suits and things out of old clothes. She sewed it down and you know she had the apron factory. She was a pretty good sewer. So she sewed me an outfit, and so with that, I started school. I remember Ruth buying

TSUKAMOTO: me a pair of shoes. I remember Ruth buying me a couple of dresses once in a while.

But anyway, with Mable's help, I went to the College of the Pacific. And it's only 1933. [Mary was told by the College registrar], "You shouldn't go into education. They'll never hire you as a teacher. Nobody will hire you in America." 1933. And so I thought, well, I told Dad I can't be a teacher. But Dad kept saying, "Well, if you study, something will come of it." And so I did.

And then, I got arthritis so bad, and I was in so much pain, and it was excruciating pain. And I had to walk up and down the stairs and go up to this room and places on the campus. I couldn't bear it. I had it bad in my hips and knee, all the joints. It's funny, but I had it at the beginning when I started at nineteen. And I haven't had it that excruciating pain since then. But off and on, I get it. Now like when I fell. Of course my joints get creaky and everything. [I hung on and struggled to study and work for two years.] But anyway, I quit and went home, because . . .

IRITANI: You've had arthritis from about what age?

TSUKAMOTO: Nineteen.

IRITANI: From the time you were nineteen. Before that, you had not really noticed it?

TSUKAMOTO: And then I moved into a doctor's home and they checked. She had tonsils taken out, she sent me to the dentist and had all my infected teeth pulled out, sent me to the University of California Medical Center and they knew nothing about arthritis in those days. Not very much was done. And she had corresponded with a doctor in London who was using a serum. So she tried that. I don't know how much she paid for it, but she tried that for a while. And it didn't do any good. So I had as much help as I could from the medical field at that time. So I decided I'd better quit. Then eventually I got married, and then the war broke out.

IRITANI: Well, before you got married, Al was your boyfriend?

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. [Laughter]

IRITANI: From about when?

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, that was when I was sixteen. Still in high school.

IRITANI: And he's how much older than you?

TSUKAMOTO: Three years older.

IRITANI: So when you went in as a freshman, he was already. . .

TSUKAMOTO: Out. Yes. He was out and it was during the depression and his family couldn't afford to send him to college. Now, his story's a long one and I can't go into that. He was the only son. He couldn't get married. I mean, he was the only son and he didn't get to go to college. And you wonder why

TSUKAMOTO: Ojiisan [Al's father] with Margaret and Edith and Nami, four children, he couldn't afford to send Al to college. And Ojiisan had all kinds of debts by then. And it's because they adopted Etsuzo [George], remember the nephew from Hiroshima? And because people talked too much, he just went all out, money and everything to buy George the land so he would inherit something from Kuzo Tsukamoto [Al's father]. Sent him to Detroit because he said he wanted to be a mechanic and go to mechanic's school, sent him to jewelry school in Chicago. Sent him to wherever he said he wanted to go and spent a lot of money. So by the time Al was ready to go to college he was full of debt. He had not paid for any of the. . .

IRITANI: Al had already graduated. . .

TSUKAMOTO: High school.

IRITANI: When you became boyfriend-girlfriend?

TSUKAMOTO: No, because it was before that. Epworth League. We were friends in Epworth League.

IRITANI: Epworth League is the young high school group of the [Japanese] Methodist Church?

TSUKAMOTO: Well, we all worked together. Choir and Epworth League was all old kids and younger kids.

IRITANI: It was all the Nisei within the Epworth League.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. In Florin. Yeah. So then I said, "I'm going to college and I sure wish you could." He tried. He went to Junior College for a couple of semesters. He tried to get some. . . He was getting A's you know. While he was in high school, he fooled around. He barely slipped through classes. He fooled around a lot. He didn't study. [Laughter] So we found out he's not so dumb after all. Anyway, he didn't care about studying. Well, anyway, that was the story about Al. And I felt bad because. . . I think Ojiisan and Obaasan, too, that they would have wanted him to get a good education. He never could. . .

IRITANI: So he worked right out of high school.

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, he worked before leaving high school. From his Freshman year. During the summer time these kids were driving trucks, picking up strawberries. See, for Harold Ouchida, because he was his brother-in-law. And so they had been hired early. And he became a strawberry salesman on the strawberry market. So they were working, but that was. . . you know they could barely make a living on that. And during pear time they went to *Kawashima* to make crates.

IRITANI: Went to where?

TSUKAMOTO: Courtland. We called it *Kawashima*.

IRITANI: I didn't know that.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. Courtland to make crates. He was pretty good at crate making. And they made so much money. But every cent was needed for the family to survive.

IRITANI: You were married in 19 what year?

TSUKAMOTO: *Nandatta*. [What was that? I struggled to stay in College of the Pacific for two more years. I was twenty one.] Thirty six. 1936. November twenty second.

IRITANI: You're celebrating your sixtieth [60th] anniversary very shortly.

TSUKAMOTO: It's going to be on Sunday, the seventeenth.

IRITANI: Very shortly. And then after you got married, you lived. . .

TSUKAMOTO: We lived with the Tsukamotos.

IRITANI: With the family.

TSUKAMOTO: So we had to do what we could to raise strawberries and blackberries and grapes. And Al kept working selling strawberries on the market.

IRITANI: And they owned their own land.

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, yeah. Ojiisan, well it was bought in Al and Edith's and Margaret's names, so they were the owners for a while. And then later on they changed it over to Al when Edith and Margaret were married. And so eventually Al was the owner. But that's how Ojiisan got the property with their names.

[End Audio Tape 2, Side A, Session 1]

[Begin Audio Tape 2, Side B, Session 1]

IRITANI: But they were already adults, weren't they, when he bought the property?

TSUKAMOTO: No, because they were still children. Ojiisan moved to that property in 1920. Al was only 8.

IRITANI: Oh, I see. So he was. . .

TSUKAMOTO: Al was 8, so Edith would have been 1909. So Edith would have been [19], and Margaret was [20].

IRITANI: Oh, so she was still under age, as well then.

TSUKAMOTO: So it was made. . . I don't know how he managed to. . .

IRITANI: Oh, I know some people purchased land in their children's, minor children's names.

TSUKAMOTO: Minor children's names.

IRITANI: I really think it really depended on whoever was in charge. The person with the county or whoever allowed it to go through. Everybody was. . . . And that's it. That was just right.

TSUKAMOTO: Well, so, we haven't come to the internment yet?

IRITANI: No, we have not.

[End Audio Tape 2, Side B, Session 1]

[End of Session 1]

[Session 2, October 15, 1996]

[Begin Audio Tape 1, Side A, Session 2]

IRITANI: October 15, 1996. and we are here to do a second session of Mary Tsukamoto, her oral history interview. And I would like to start with the photos that we showed yesterday that did not come out as I would have liked.

This is a picture of Mary's mother holding her sister Masako here, and her great grandmother, and grandmother, taken in Okinawa. This is the picture of her grandfather Dakuzaku taken in Japan, and the man on this end, this end, is grandfather Dakuzaku. And Mary also spoke about when the Prince of Okinawa came. This is very shiny, however, you can see this gentleman here, that is the Prince of Okinawa. And we did not show this yesterday, but this is a picture of Mary when she was, how old Mary? Nine months, I think, was what you have said. Isn't that sweet? Taken in San Francisco. And this is a picture of Mary and her sister [Haru] Ruth in San Francisco, at the laundry. Two cute little girls. And this is a picture of her family in San Francisco. Really shine, don't they? Her father, no. Her

IRITANI: Uncle [Choshin Dakuzaku], her Aunt [Nobuko Oda Dakuzaku], her Father [Taro Chosei Dakuzaku], Mother [Kame Yoshinaga Dakuzaku], her sister Ruth [Haru], and Mary [Tsuru] sitting on her mother's lap.

TSUKAMOTO: That's when Auntie came from Japan as a bride.

IRITANI: Very nice looking picture. And this is a very special picture taken, again, during that time that your aunt came as a bride. And [Mary's] Father is on this side, her mother is sitting here, and Ruth and Mary. And on the wall, see if I can get that, is Abraham Lincoln's picture. And so we understand what Mary was saying about Abraham Lincoln yesterday. And this is the picture of the children working in the fields of Florin. I'll just leave it in. [They are] wearing their overalls. Working very hard every day, I'm assuming after school. And this is a picture we did not show yesterday, but her father built this house. Her family and friends are in front of the house. The car, we're assuming is a model-T Ford? Or a model-A?

TSUKAMOTO: It's the first house he built in the United States after coming. Twenty years [in America before he had a chance to] finally build his own house [with help from experienced house builder, Mr. Nakamura.]

IRITANI: He was able to build his own house.

TSUKAMOTO: Of course, Mr. Nakamura helped him.

IRITANI: And here is the family, the five girls and little brother, George, mother and father. Mary is in the middle in the back.

TSUKAMOTO: That's 1929, the year I graduated from [Florin] Grammar School.

IRITANI: A very attractive family. And here is Mary with her cup. I hope it shows the cup.

TSUKAMOTO: That's in 1933, my senior year in high school.

IRITANI: There we go. Very attractive. And I also brought the yearbook Mary worked on, the year you graduated from high school?

TSUKAMOTO: Elk Grove.

IRITANI: From Elk Grove. It's called *The Elk*. And Mary did the cover. And she also did the inside.

TSUKAMOTO: Linoleum carving. A whole semester to carve that.

IRITANI: To carve the linoleum for this yearbook. And I'll show you the picture of Mary. Mary's graduation picture, I guess. Yearbook picture. There in the corner. And I want to show Mable Barron. A very, very special teacher that she had, who encouraged her in so many ways. And that's a very special person. I want to show just a few more before we get back to Mary's narrative. Mary wore this kimono, I guess for some program. 1933. It says on the back. And we

IRITANI: learned about handsome Al. Where are you Al? There you go. Which way. There it cleared up. There's Al. About the time you got married?

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. Just before, I guess.

IRITANI: And then this is a picture prewar, 1941, Mary and Al, and that brings us up to date, I think, on your narrative.

So Mary, I'd like to have you start by talking just a little bit about your church. I know you had a. . . I know the church was very special to you, and so, can we start with. . . .

TSUKAMOTO: Well, in 1925, when we moved to Florin, Rev. and Mrs. Haratani were the pastors there at the Florin Japanese Methodist Church. We had never been to a community where so many Japanese lived there. And it was no wonder some people called it a Japanese Village in America. We couldn't believe all the Japanese farmers that were concentrated in that area, but that meant that many people were members of the Methodist Church. I didn't know anything about the Buddhist Church until later. [They had a much greater membership and a strong Japanese Language School.] But in 1925, we came to Florin and found Mrs. Haratani and Rev. Haratani, both teaching Japanese language school. [They were here in 1925, '26, and '27.] We went to the language school after school, we'd have a few hour classes. And I remember the times we spent playing

TSUKAMOTO: with the kids while the other classes were in session, waiting for our turn. And finally when we were called in, it was just a short session. That's how we tried to learn some Japanese. Though we weren't too interested nor were we too excited about learning Japanese. But we did go because our parents wanted us to. And they were anxious that we would grow up learning enough Japanese so we could carry on a conversation with the parents. And that we wouldn't become foreigners in the same home. We didn't appreciate all that. It was a lot of money, and [expensive,] and other people get to play all afternoon after school. But it wasn't true for us. If we didn't go to Japanese school, we had to get out in the farm anyway. But it was wonderful what Dad and Mom tried to do, send us to Japanese language school. So, each minister taught language school, as well as be our minister in our church. And so we got acquainted with the King's Daughters Club, the girls in the church had organized. I don't know how many years before that. But the girls in the church, even some of the older ones who had married were invited back to a joint get-together. And we'd have parties and meetings and inspirational devotional services for just the girls on the afternoon. Usually it might have been Sunday afternoon. Ending up of course, with refreshments. But it was kind of a fun

TSUKAMOTO: thing. And different ministers gave us different experiences. The one that you just saw had Rev. Sasaki in it.

And it was when Rev. and Mrs. Sasaki came, that Japanese cultural education was really started. [We were surprised and impressed with her Japanese cultural education. She managed to teach us "country bumpkins" in Florin's bleak depression years.]* And that included teaching us how to cook Japanese food that we never thought much of before. We only knew what Mom and Pop would serve on the table and many times Mom was too busy to make anything very fancy. But Mrs. Sasaki talked about nutritious food that was Japanese food, certain food that was good for our health. This she served her children before they had their test. She tried to remind us that certain food was good for our brain and our intelligence and alertness. And so it was quite an education. She also taught us how to do tie-dyeing. And that was an entirely new experience. And many other things besides. Flower arrangement and how to have manners. We were learning how to speak to people, and how to treat people kindly. And so, if we picked up anything about Japanese culture, it really started with Mrs. Kohana Sasaki, which I consider a

*Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

TSUKAMOTO: very special teacher. And I'm sorry I don't have a picture here of her, but that's her husband, Rev. Y. Sasaki. And they were devoted, wonderful ministers for ten years. And it was during the depression from '32 to '42. And there were times that we had no money to pay them. But I remember they said, "We'll endure what you're going through with hardships. We'll be willing to work." She even went out to pick strawberries for some of the farmers. And Rev. Sasaki even used the shovel to dig the earth to plant *daikon* [long, white radish] and *negi* [green onion] and things that he shared with the members. And he said, "We'll try to feed the family by growing things." And they really lived without much money, and I often think what a wonderful example of Christian sacrifice that they showed us. They loved us and continued to stay in Florin. So, when we were shocked to be evacuated, this was really a tragic time for us when we were to be scattered.

Now, the Sunday School continued to grow, and we had different ministers that followed Rev. Haratani. [At Florin - Rev. Iwakichi Haratani 1925-26, Rev. Seichi

TSUKAMOTO: Niwa 1927-28, Rev. Hiroshi Norisuye 1929-30-31, Rev. Yonosuke Sasaki 1932-42.]* There was Rev. Niwa, and I don't see a minister in that picture, but there were children and many of them were very faithful and many parents were very interested that the children grow up with religious education. So we had a pretty good group. Epworth League, too. The young people naturally formed the Epworth League group, and many of them were the older young people. I guess they had to be in high school. I don't remember. I might have been in seventh or eighth grade when I was taken in.

IRITANI: This is Mary here.

TSUKAMOTO: So, I guess seventh or eighth grade we qualified for membership in the Epworth League. Seemed like we were always active in the Epworth League. But they were sponsoring [fun things we did.] We went camping or we went to joint meetings with other churches, or we went to conferences where we met other Christians. And so the impact of Christian Education was very powerful and meaningful to me at this time in my life when we were very impressionable. So in between working in our strawberry field, Dad never hesitated to say, "Yes, you'd better go." And if all the young people were going, he

*Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

TSUKAMOTO: allowed us to be excused from working in the field so that we could attend the conference, or attend the joint meeting, or even go to a picnic the young people sponsored. So, it was a very powerful impact, and we put on plays at Christmas and put on. . . The King's Daughters Club annually had a. . . we called it a variety show. And we tried to encourage talent from our group. Many of them ended up becoming pantomimists and singers and dancers. We created dances. And sold tickets and tried to have this [become an annual] summer event. So, there were a lot of fun things we did.

And when Mrs. Sasaki came, something completely unimagined before happened. She was such a talented person. She rewrote the Bible stories into drama, and even wrote famous *samurai* stories into drama that the kids could understand. These kids that didn't know very much about Japanese [history and culture], memorized their parts, and wore *samurai* clothes and *chonmage* [hair piece] and put on plays. And that excited the parents and we were thrilled to know Bible stories could be dramatized and put on as a special event. So, Easter time or Christmas or the summer variety show became special during the time that Mrs. Sasaki was there. So, we will never forget some of the things that with her talent of writing script and making it

TSUKAMOTO: dramatic. It was very interesting. And of course, I've always had to sit by the piano. I gave the background music. And so I never got to be in the play. But, I was there at every rehearsal. And the patience that they had!

Rev. Sasaki would build a fire and boil a big pot of *udon* [Japanese noodles]. So that they would be sure that we were fed during the rehearsal, so everybody would come. And it was just impressive when we think about it. They had little money, but they were willing to do anything to get the young people interested.

And these kids were more interested in basketball and the social hall had a [small size] basketball court. And they would shoot baskets until Mrs. Sasaki had to call them up to the stage for their turn in the play. [Laughter] So I often remember, as I sat there at the piano, I was watching all that going on, how inspiring they were as an example of dedication and caring about the young people. And I think that's why, most of us never forgot the Sasaki.

And that goes to show you that in 1978, after the traumatic war experience and the internment and the years later, when they settled in New Jersey, and Rev. Sasaki died in New Jersey, Mrs. Sasaki came back to Los Angeles with her children and settled there. In 1978, Al and I first of all said, "We've got to honor her" when we found out she was

TSUKAMOTO: eighty. We put on an eightieth birthday party. It's in one of the albums that I have. We brought pictures of her and the *Sha-on-kai* that we gave her. [*Sha-on-kai*, an event to express appreciation.] And we wrote it up in the paper, and hundred fifty [150] former Methodist Church members came from all over to honor her, and to have our first taste of a reunion. I never realized what the reunion could be, until 1978. No other group was talking about reunion. We started it because we wanted to be sure that on her eightieth birthday, Mrs. Sasaki could be [honored and] recognized. And so we even bought her a diamond necklace. [Laughter] I don't know if she ever wore it. But that's the way we felt about her. She talked about *Kongoseki* [diamond] and it was supposed to be a precious stone that was written up in a very famous song, the Empress wrote. *Kongoseki wa miga kazu ba*" and they sang that song for her that night when we presented the necklace to her. But anyway, that was the least of things that interested Mrs. Sasaki. But we were all inspired.

I needed to go back to that as I talked about her. The influence of the minister and the church had in my life, as they stood by us in all kinds of hardships, and when we were evacuating, the church doors were open to keep our precious things. My silver cup was left there hoping that it

TSUKAMOTO: would be safe, but then vandals got in and it was knocked all over and it's broken out of shape. That's where we left it. And other people left their things at church. But it wasn't that great.

IRITANI: Could you elaborate on the wartime then, start with December seventh, or anything before that if you would like.

TSUKAMOTO: Well, before that, in October and November, finally my father--and I wanted to be sure to get that picture of his passport. He arranged to have a passport [he lost his in the San Francisco earthquake in 1906] and finally got permission to get the passport. And he had the money saved, and was finally, after all these years, nearly, almost forty years, about thirty five, forty years. Since 1905, he had never seen his mother. And we all decided it was time he should go. So we were going to all pitch in and have him go. Then Uncle and everybody said, "Already, October and November, there's all kinds of talk about Japan and the United States. And it could be that the ship won't go through, or you won't get to Okinawa, or even get back." So then Uncle and all of them decided, "It's not safe for you to go." So Dad's great dream of going to see his mom and maybe seeing his daughter, never came true then. But that was the disappointment that I remember feeling sorry as we

TSUKAMOTO: were worried about the rumors and the newspaper and the radio reports about the impending troubles. And how the Ambassadors came and tried to create some peace discussions, and how it failed. Kurusu and. . . And so this is the way we were shocked to find that December seventh actually happened. And that the way it happened, and the way it was reported, and the way President Roosevelt said it was "the year of infamy." And how terrible we felt that it was our parents' country that did this! And we suffered for knowing how bad it must have been for Dad and Mom and all the Isseis. But they kept saying, "But this is your country. We've been here long enough to know that this is where our roots will be. Our children's children are being born here. This is where we're going to live and die." So Dad and Mom, and Ojiisan and Obaasan [Al's parents], we knew where they stood. But for many people, it must have been a very difficult time. So we were running around upset. I remember I was at church on that Sunday, December seventh. I was playing the piano. For the Isseis, because they had their services at 11:00. And the Niseis were busy teaching Sunday School kids their Christmas program numbers. We were busy with that, so we didn't have our English service. But for the Issei service, I was playing the piano when Al came running in to say, "I just heard on the

TSUKAMOTO: radio that Japan bombed Pearl Harbor." And everybody was stunned and we just stood there in silence, and the minister, we didn't know what to say. Then some people started to cry. We were tied to our pews, not knowing what to do. We knew that we were frightened to go out even. But then we realized that we can't stay here. And so we had to begin to move out of the church and go home, but it was a long, long way to get home that day. And we were so afraid, that immediately as we got home, we turned the radio on to hear what else they were saying. We were glued to the radio, and shocked and frightened and the FBI, we heard rumors already. The FBI had been knocking on doors. They had a list of people they knew they had to watch. And we knew some of them had been targeted. Like the *Heimushakai* they were the young *Kibeis* [born in the United States, educated in Japan and returned to the United States] who came from Japan more recently. But instead of being in the [Japanese] army, they contributed money instead so they could buy their freedom to be in America instead of going back to Japan [to be drafted] to fight in the Japanese army. So the *Heimushakai* not only contributed their own money, they went around collecting from other people. So the FBI knew who they were, and they had their names already down on the paper. So Mr. Tsuji we knew

TSUKAMOTO: would go, and then there were some people who were active in the Buddhist Church and had visitors come from Japan so often, they were suspected as those who may have made special contributions to the military in Japan. And so the Buddhist priest, the Buddhist leaders, like Mr. Tanigawa were taken. And those that were active in the *kendo* [Japanese fencing], it was a sports activity, but in the last few years, it was suspiciously revived with great enthusiasm for kendo training, and Nakamura *sensei* from Japan came with his black gown, and a lot of people gathered around to see the kendo demonstration. And his sermons, you know, he always made a speech, and spoke about *Yamato damashi* [Japanese spirit of loyalty to Japan and the Emperor] and all.

So that deep down in my heart, I was really concerned. What did they mean by all of that? They went up and down the state, organizing. And so many communities turned completely over to kendo program, and many young people like James Abe's father was a kendo enthusiast from Japan, so he got his outfit and he dressed his son, and they were all out there, not missing a single rehearsal, and they were having tournaments and contests between other communities, They'd get together for big tournaments. They were very obvious. They gathered big crowds. And among them there'd be some *hakujins* [Caucasians]. And

TSUKAMOTO: so I know some of them suspiciously thought this activity as one that you needed to watch. And so we had reasons, the way we were behaving, that maybe we deserved to be suspected. But anyway, [sigh] you could almost forget all that, but that's what happened. And so before we knew it, there were many, many people in Florin and Taishoku [area northeast of Florin] and Mayhew were picked up [by the FBI], and then we heard a terrible thing. Mr. Iwasa just had a stroke and he could hardly speak, and he was in bed. The FBI grabbed him and tried to make him talk and tried to make him say "so-and-so", the neighbors, they had done this and that, and he couldn't speak English well. And he just knew that whatever he said might have betrayed his friends and he couldn't stand it! He committed suicide. These are the shocking things that we heard. The tragedies that was happening all around us and the unfairness of these FBI coming into our homes without a warrant and turning things upside down and opening all the drawers and spilling all the papers and pictures to see what was written on it. And anything written with Japanese they suspected. And of course, we knew about Ojiisan [Al's father], being seventy five. He had been given an award from the Emperor, *Sakazaki* [rice wine servers] and certificates in Japanese and all kinds of things that Issei

TSUKAMOTO: pioneers were recognized. Well, Al says, "We'd better burn all that because it's better to have Ojiisan safe here than be picked up, so we burned everything. I remember Obaasan [Al's mother] cried as we gathered all these artifacts and old pictures and papers with Japanese things written on it. And it's a wonder we still have a few things left. But that's what we did. We burned, had a big bonfire out in the front of our house and burned. A lot of people did that so they could be protected from the FBI. So the few days and weeks were just nothing but fear and anguish, holding our breath, hoping that they won't come to our place.

IRITANI: And when did the JACL start the newsletter after Executive Order 9066.

TSUKAMOTO: Well, this was a period of darkness, and I don't even know whether we remembered we were JACL members, but in March, March second or some day like that, in the paper and PCs [Pacific Citizen, the JACL newspaper], JACL was trying their best to represent the Japanese and told [Congressional] Committees speaking and hearing and trying to stand up for Japanese Americans and insisting that we would be loyal, and that we would be willing to fight for our country, and that we would not betray our land. But they finally called a meeting in San Francisco. And so I remember Al and I went to that meeting with [a few of] the other JACL leaders

TSUKAMOTO: from Florin. And so several hundred got together in San Francisco. And that decision they announced that we can't stop this evacuation from happening. That it looks as though there's nothing we could do to stop it, and that we're going to have to kind of go along with it, and work the best we can to prepare and help our people.

So then we heard about the welfare office going to extend their help in reaching out to help us. And that there would be a Federal Social Security Agency, Farm Security Agency, that was going to be in charge of concerns with the farmers and their property. And the Federal Reserve Bank was sending representatives to take care of the financial concerns of the evacuees. And then all these groups were forming to become a part of the War . . . WCCA. . . [the Wartime Civilian Control Administration] that [Colonel Karl] Bendetsen becomes the head of. These all developed. And the WCCA was the umbrella under which the welfare, the Social Welfare Agency, the Federal Reserve Bank, and the Farm Security Agency would work together. So this was the contact that JACL leaders in local areas were to make. So the JACL had its meeting and they said, "Well, we'd better appoint somebody to be in charge of these contacts [in Florin]."

[End Audio Tape 1, Side A, Session 2]

[Begin Audio Tape 1, Side B, Session 2]

TSUKAMOTO: And so they looked at me, and realized I was home and I wasn't working really, I was going to be picking strawberries, and all the other people had jobs at the state. Or Al would be driving trucks. So I got the job. And so it was after the middle of March, then we decided that this office needed to be opened. Well, when this office got opened, I had no idea what I was supposed to do, and they were going to call me an executive secretary, but I didn't know what that meant. I was supposed to do for this community, but as I attended the meeting with the WCCA and the War Security Agency and all of that, they began to tell us of their concerns. That we want to be sure, that in this period, there aren't people that have special needs. Then I thought about Mrs. Tsuji. Mr. Tsuji was the first one picked up as *Heimushakai*. Then we found out she'd been hungry and they had no one to drive and go to the store, so the kids and she were at home hungry. And I cried and I said, "Gee whiz, there might be other people we didn't even think about." We were only selfish to be thinking about our own fears. But in all this confusion, we found that the community had other problems and aches. And sorrows. Because each one that had a husband taken, must have had ten thousand things to worry about. And nobody had taken

TSUKAMOTO: the time to even go see them, or to find out what it was we could do for them. It would just seem like the work was too big, and that we could never catch up with all of this. But in this process, we realized that we needed to communicate with the people. And that I thought, gee you know, I talked to Dr. Ito, and he said, "We ought to protect them [for] their health, maybe we'd better vaccinate them and give them diphtheria shots and tetanus shots and things like that. " And so a big meeting was called. We told everybody, and sent this bulletin out to tell them that we're setting a date for a health clinic and that we had arranged for doctors and nurses to give their free time and that just for a few dollars we were going to inoculate everybody that was going to go. We knew that the day for Florin to evacuate was coming and that there were other communities like Terminal Island [in Los Angeles Harbor] and other places were being evacuated. Puget Sound [Washington] was being evacuated. We know that the Bay Area and the people near the coast are being evacuated by the end of March and beginning of April. We knew that we couldn't stop this. And so we thought we'd better be ready, and we called them to come. And so they all quit work to come that day. And it was amazing. The hall was filled!

IRITANI; Which hall did you meet in?

TSUKAMOTO: Buddhist Church's YBA Hall. That was the only big gathering place we had, big enough for everybody.

IRITANI: The same hall that we still use.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. It was built in '38.

IRITANI: Oh. Right.

TSUKAMOTO: And so, that's where, the corner of it that's where we had our office. And we borrowed the Methodist Church's mimeographing machine. And Tommy Kushi and all of those that knew how to type came over and helped me. I had a big group of people that assisted me. In one of the bulletins I named them. All of them who helped me type including my cousins Shizu and Yeiko.

That's another story. We had to go pick them up [the family of Uncle Choshin Dakuzaku in Oakland.] My Dad and Uncle decided they had better go together. And so Al borrowed a big company's truck. Northern California Farms Company's truck and we went over to move the whole family. Then we moved their piano and we brought it back to Florin. And they stayed at my father's place. So every house that could opened up and were packed with people moving in from the Bay Area, relatives [and friends] moved in. And so here they were. Yeiko and Shizu helped to do a lot of the typing. Hide and all of them helped pick strawberries and that helped. Or work in the crops. It wasn't

TSUKAMOTO: strawberries, yet, but they had to hoe and get things ready for the farm. So that's how we were publishing the announcements and reports, and each welfare meeting, we heard about Mrs. Tsuji, we announced "if there others that needed help, please relay that information to us. We need to know to help them." And then we found out there were people that were coming by to ask me, because we found out that there was a five-mile curfew. It's more than five miles to Sacramento to our banks, to our stores. There weren't big grocery stores all over. We had to go all the way to town to get to a store where we could buy a variety of foods. And the Japanese stores in Florin had difficulty getting their supplies. So we had to find ways, and they had to go into a WCCA office downtown, violating the law already to get a permit. Crazy! And so, Isabel's driver's license [expired]. She had to get it renewed. She got caught by the police because she didn't have a driver's license and she was on her way to get it renewed. Well, they called my office, so when they called like that, and lucky for us, there was a retired [police] officer who was Hugh Kiino's friend. Hugh Kiino was my brother-in-law and was the [Florin JACL] president. He asked Charlie, [his friend], to hang around the office, so when he was there, I'd just tell him. My sister got pinched and she was on her way to get her license, so he went right over. He

TSUKAMOTO: helped us a lot when people got into trouble. But anyway, people were scared, but they had to do certain things. They had to go to the bank. And so the five-mile curfew was terrible. And then the eight o'clock curfew was another bad thing. We couldn't have night meetings. Florin JACL couldn't have night meetings, but we had to stop work during the day to get together. Everybody had to quit working in the fields to come in for a JACL meeting. And I remember in the bulletin I called for a 6:00 o'clock meeting, in the morning. So they could still go back to their farms after the meeting. We had to do crazy things like that and still run around to buy our slacks and shoes and things because we were going up into the mountains, someplace where there might be rattlesnakes. We had no idea what kind of place we were going to go. So we were all scared and knew we had to get ready, and we had to pack, and we had to take only what we could carry. So we said we need a duffel bag. We can't even get a canvas to wrap up things because it will come apart. So we had to then try to buy canvas duffel bags sewed. And then we ran around doing that, too, instead of working in our field. So I had to do that for my family and still we had to work on the assignment at the WCCA office that moved in to Florin eventually, so that they could be right there. So, soon because there were so

TSUKAMOTO: many people that we were helping, they decided it was worth it if they moved from Sacramento to right in Florin. So we made space in our Florin Buddhist [YBA Hall] to have them come. Then the schools who heard about us, they offered to feed us lunch because we had no restaurant in Florin. And these people were there and we had to worry about their lunch so, that's what happened. We thanked them for the lunch they offered us while we were in there running around trying to write the last information.

But in the meantime, I had a box stacked full of letters, copies of letters that I sent to the governor, to the President of the United States, to DeWitt, to all these thanking them for their kindness, for the humane way they were treating us. And all of that, and I just about cringe, as I think, well, what in the world made me do things like that! What made me think that that was what they were doing? But anyway, I was innocent. I was so naive. I just took the whole thing like it was something that had to be done. Never thought that there was anything wrong done by the President or the United States government. And so innocently thanked people, and wrote letters. All the senators and congressmen and California assemblymen. I wrote to them all thanking them for their support and kindness. I don't know what they thought of me. But I did write letters for the Florin

TSUKAMOTO: people. We had to see that the humane society's notified so that pets could be taken care of. We didn't want anybody running off and leaving a hungry dog and let it just become homeless. So there were a lot of things to tend to. And we had, I found out at the welfare, as we were signing up, who should go and where they should go, and that was another tragic thing when we found out that we were not all going together. "That you mean this community was going to be split up?" We never thought that. We thought we were all going together. And it didn't matter as long as we were together. But soon we found out that the people on the west side of the railroad track was going to take the bus and were registered in Florin, and were sent to Marysville and to Tule Lake. And so, Sasaki *sensei* and the whole bunch from the church from the west side of the track who lived there, went that way. And then we had the people north of the railroad track, and that's when Harold decided, call Mom and Dad and everybody, so we registered together. And so when he lined them all up and they signed up and registered, some of the other family had registered to go to Fresno. They counted the number and they didn't have room for them on the train. So then they tried to move them to Manzanar. And this time, Mrs. Nakao came, and said, she blamed me for doing all that. She said, "*Shi ni ika su.*" She said you're

TSUKAMOTO: going to make us go to Manzanar to die. None of us had anything to do with anything. But then she, I don't know if she ever forgave me. But I still talk to some of those who were in Nakao's, but anyway, I never will forget, because her son Herb was Al's best friend. One of the grooms men at his wedding. And though he's dead now, you know we never thought that they would turn against us. So we don't know what happened. But anyway, they were scheduled to go with us the next day, but that day while they were picking strawberries and eating lunch, the army came and said, "Get ready. You only have two hours."

IRITANI: Oh, really, two hours?

TSUKAMOTO: They didn't even have time to wash the dishes and they just packed up.

IRITANI: Two hours?!

TSUKAMOTO: She came over to my house, blaming me. And that's what happened. But I got blamed for a lot of things because I was working in the office. They thought I had a lot more influence then. It's taken me a long time to try to get over all of the things that happened, you know. And then I had to do another terrible thing. The Kurimas had a boy that never grew up and he was thirty two years old. Just like an infant he still had to wear diapers. And he was never smart enough to go to school. And mother kind of carried him

TSUKAMOTO: with his overalls. She held his overall and helped him walk. He couldn't even walk alone. But she took care of him. And loved him and fed him and spoke Japanese to him. And then she had Herb, yes, Herb Kurima was the next oldest one, and then Gary, and then there was another one, the youngest one *nandatta ka ne?* [What was his name?] Well, they had five kids, and this oldest one was the one that wasn't normal. So she had four other children. But I had to go and tell her that Welfare Office said she can't take a child like that. He's got to be institutionalized. And I had to go and tell her. And I remember she was out in the berry patch hoeing. And I cried and cried as I tried to tell her that the Welfare lady said, "You can't take him. So, you're going to have to institutionalize him." And they were going to come to get him in a day or two. She cried and she said she'll be ready, you know. And then when we got to Fresno, there were other kids like him there.

IRITANI: Oh-h-h.

TSUKAMOTO: I never will forget the inconsistency of the Welfare Offices all over the state. There were people that just gave in.

IRITANI: To each his own criteria for each office.

TSUKAMOTO: So when I saw that, I cried some more, and I thought, "My gosh, what will Mrs. Kurima think." But then a week later

[at the Fresno Assembly Center], the letter came from the institution that he had died.

IRITANI: In that one week.

TSUKAMOTO: And so I didn't know what to say, you know, when I had to go to speak to her.

IRITANI: So you were asked to inform her in Fresno as well?

TSUKAMOTO: No, the family got the wire.

IRITANI: Oh, I see.

TSUKAMOTO: But I had to go and speak to the family of their sorrow and their loss. And I came home and I cried and cried. I told Al, "I feel so bad." But anyway, I told Monchan [Herb Kurima] and all the other family members, you know, I never will forget that. I was so sorry. But several months later the family gave me forty dollars and they said not to worry, you know. They wanted to *orei* [to thank me]. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to accept the money like that. But in a way I often thought, maybe Mrs. Kurima thought. . . . It was a great, great tragic thing that happened in her life. But maybe she was kind of glad she didn't have to take care of him.

IRITANI: Very difficult. Like you say, each area had their own little rules, their own criteria.

TSUKAMOTO: Some of them even had their little dogs there. Marielle cried. She couldn't take Uppie. They told her, "No dogs."

And this little lap dog had a ribbon on her hair, quite curly. Curly haired little lap dog. I don't know, but Marielle cried for two weeks. She wouldn't stop crying.

IRITANI: I didn't see any dogs in our camp.

TSUKAMOTO: Our neighbor had this lap dog. So it's those things that. . .

IRITANI: The human tragedy. Absolutely. So you went to Fresno Assembly Center at the end of May.

TSUKAMOTO: And it was so hot.

IRITANI: Of course.

TSUKAMOTO: On May 29, [1942]. It was the last day that we were free. The tragic thing was, Harold [Ouchida, Al's brother-n-law] and the strawberry company had loaned money to all the farmers, and loaned them the shook material they used to build the crates, and that had to be paid for, somebody had to pay for it. But then with all of that, they were finally bringing a few crates of strawberries in late May. But the peak of the strawberry season hadn't come. And so every day, Edith [Ouchida, Al's sister] said, "It took me a long time, but Harold and I decided, that because they're going to leave, we're going to give them cash for every crate they bring. So they did that. And with all the debt that these farmers owed him and his company, they were willing to give them some cash, because they knew what a hardship it was going to be to go to camp without anything. These farmers had

TSUKAMOTO: nothing. Because they borrowed from the *kaisha* [company], in advance and worked to sell strawberries, and then ate through the winter, borrowed some more through the winter, borrowed for the shook and then sold their crop to pay the debt next year. They were just barely making it. And so Harold knew that, and he couldn't. . . Edith was the bookkeeper. And so she said, "It took me a long time, but I added everything up and cash, we tried to give them cash for every crate they brought." And so we left. But at the peak of the strawberry season, when we couldn't pick all the berries that were rotting in the fields! [What a great price they lost!] We had to leave on the 29th of May. It was a hot day, but everybody wore their overcoats and hat. Crazy. I think about that even now. Why did they wear their hats and coats? It was easier to wear it than to carry it or leave it in a suitcase. So we looked like that as we were piling onto the train. But we went to Elk Grove [train station]. Bob Fletcher and George Feil's family came by to pick us up. And we had our luggage piled up on Bob Fletcher's pickup. And that's how we went to Elk Grove. And every family had neighbors or somebody. They had sold their car or truck, so friends were willing to drive them to Elk Grove. So they were just piled high with baggage and luggage and family members as we drove into Elk Grove. And I

TSUKAMOTO: remember a small handful of teachers and a few students that came from Elk Grove [High School] to see us off. I never will forget that. It was hard. And I remember Mr. Learned he said his wife couldn't come but she sent sandwiches. She just couldn't take it to come and see us off. I remember Mr. Learned had been a good friend. He had been the Elk Grove High School Principal once before, and then he had moved to the City school system and was a principal there in the City. He had a daughter who was married was willing to take our dining table, chairs and dining table and my piano. So I was happy that it would be taken care of. But different people offered different things. We tried to take care of some of the things, but the rest of the things, we put up in the barn, second floor of the barn, and shut the door.

But we were lucky. Bob Fletcher, I need to talk about Bob Fletcher. He was Al's very dear friend. And he was one in a million. He was willing to give up his inspector's job. He had a nice state inspector's job and he was a good friend of Al's at the strawberry market where he worked. And so Al talked to him. He said, "You know, I'm a token member of the Florin Fruit Growers Association." There were five board members and Al's one of them. But he was just a token representing the Japanese people. But when he came

TSUKAMOTO: in the room, they stopped talking. And he began to get suspicious that there was something that they were talking about they didn't want Al to know. So he told Bob, that I'm not going to let the [inaudible] group of Fruit Growers Association handle my farm. I'm going to try to get you to run it for me. So Bob agreed. And [Al] said, "All you have to do is pay for my taxes and you can have the, whatever you make on it." And during the first World War, the Japanese people really made a lot of money. It was successful, prosperous time. And so Al said, "I know that you're going to make good while we're gone. So you can run the farm" so he said, "I talked to Bill Okamoto who's adjoining [neighbor.] And then Mr. Nitta joins our farm, and the three farms together would be over a hundred acres." He said, "If you ran the whole three farms together and ran the tractor through you could probably manage." So Bob said, "I'll do that." He went to the lawyer and got papers made, and agreed that he would do it with half share. And Al says, "No, we don't need that." But he says, "No, it's going to be done half share no matter how small the money is." And so he would not agree to any other arrangement, and so each of us had savings account when we came home. We were the only ones in Florin that could talk about that, because those who turned it over to the Association, the .

TSUKAMOTO: Association found somebody else to run the farms for them. They had nothing. They hadn't even paid for the taxes. They hadn't paid any. . . . And they'd use their tractors and ruin it and it wasn't in working condition when they got home. And gee, they were just really upset what had happened to their vineyards. Some of it was abandoned and the grape vines were half dead because they hadn't watered it enough or taken care of it. So Bob had our vines growing well. And we knew he worked hard. He had lights on his tractor and plowed through the field, you know, during the night, and he managed to run the three farms. And he took care of keeping books so that he could sell whatever he could and kept half of it for himself, and then each of the farms their share of half was put in the savings account. So we know he was a very special friend. He's still our best friend. And he's still alive, so we're very happy that we can tell him that over and over again. And in the meantime he's remarried. Teresa is his [present] wife. And they just had their fiftieth anniversary last year. So I'm very happy. But he had married Clara, and she had a daughter. It was her second marriage. And I guess, she couldn't have been a farmer's wife. That's what it was.

Well, when we got to Fresno, we would hear from Bob and George Feil, the Association manager, and Al was

TSUKAMOTO: always concerned about what was happening back home. But other than that, we had to get busy, trying to make our adjustment in this hot place. And getting used to the crowd and no privacy. And all the things that happened. And I remember my Dad and Mom. . . there were my father, mother, George, Jean and Julia. There's five of them. The largest room was 25 X 25, so they had a large room, and there were five of them. And then my sister Jean never was very strong physically, because when she was a baby when she was first born in Turlock, and there was Ruth and me and Isabel, and my cousins, Shizu and Yeiko, all living together. We had gone to a roadside blackberry patch to pick blackberries for Mom. Of course, we ate some. And when we got back, Ruth got sick and she got delirious, and she had high fever, 104 [degrees], and Mom had her hands full with her being sick and vomiting and everything, and soon each of us took our turn at getting sick. And Jean was still just a baby. She was nursing Jean. But she was so busy taking care of us that she neglected Jean's feedings, and soon she found out she had dried up and she had to find something to feed her with, and she wasn't sure what to feed her so, I'm sure they had difficulty in finding the milk that she boiled or whatever it was wasn't good for her. So Jean grew up being very sickly. And kind of weak. I think that had something

TSUKAMOTO: to do. . . I never told her this. Mom used to worry. And I know that that was what it was. But at this time in her life, she was 21 or 22. Jean had graduated high school and gone to San Francisco to a sewing school. But she came back, she was having a nervous breakdown. Dad and Mom worried about her. And you know Mom, she took her to a *okyuu* you know, *okyuu.*, and a *momiiisha*.

IRITANI: Acupuncture?

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, acupuncture. *Momiiisha* is a massage place. And they tried to help her that way. But it didn't do much good. But anyway, she was sick in bed. And then we found out that [cough]. . . .

IRITANI: We'll talk for another fifteen minutes or so?

TSUKAMOTO: It's okay. Well, anyway, Jean was having difficulty. And living in a crowded place like that with no privacy, Jean was having a nervous breakdown. It affected Julia and George and Mom and Dad. And finally, Dad had to call Uncle, he always called Uncle to discuss things. And called us. There was no place to meet. No place to meet that was private [with five thousand people packed into this temporary holding pen!] I remember the only place we could meet was down between the barracks on the street. I remember standing there huddled in a circle trying to talk about what to do with Jean. And that the doctor said that there wasn't

TSUKAMOTO: anything the hospital could do in the camp. So it was approved and agreed that maybe the wisest thing was to put her in Stockton's mental hospital. But, Jean was kicking Julia, and having all kinds of fights and it affected Julia, too. She would kick Jean. So, this shocked us, as we realized that different individuals and families were having private concerns and couldn't even talk to anybody. We heard about a lady that jumped into a barrel trying to kill herself. And we knew that there was some other girls that were having troubles, so Jean had her problems. And this was a very painful, disappointing, shocking experience for Dad and Mom. And for Julia and Jean. And for brother George, who was a junior in high school.

[End Audio Tape 1, Side B, Session 2]

[Begin Audio Tape 2, Side A, Session 2]

TSUKAMOTO: So, we tried, you know. Ruth and I sang a lot, and Julia had a nice voice, so we sang three-part songs like hymns and things at the vesper service and worship service, and it was good for Julia, I think. But, then we began to associate with the Epworth League, or youth group. They had programs. And we found out that for me an adult, they were serious about having adult forums. That we can't waste our time here. That we need to seriously think and speak to those who would listen to us, what we must do. They asked me if

TSUKAMOTO: I would speak. And I remember we argued about what we should talk about. And so then I ended up talking about every moment is part of our lives. And though we are here, it's still part of our life. And we can't waste it. So we tried to think of all the things we needed to do not to waste our life here. So I got busy and involved with the adult education program, but also I was aware of the kids. They were all running around, Marielle and all. I know that some people were used to working with little children were forming little nursery groups. Playing with them and forming our group in the recreation building. Al got a job as a recreation manager, so everyday he went there to kind of look after that recreation hall and unlock the door.

IRITANI: That was in Fresno?

TSUKAMOTO: Fresno, right. He was keeping track of schedules in the recreation Hall. Certain hours were for Bingo, certain hours were for Girl Scout's meetings, or certain hours was for, they would have a Go Tournament or whatever, he scheduled these things. And they would use different parts of the recreation hall. They could use the whole building or part of it. He was in charge. And then he said, the kindergarten and nursery kids would have their snack time. They always had space for them in one end of it. So that, I know the real little children had something for them. But there were

TSUKAMOTO: other kids who were wandering around all over. Many of them had a good time. They went to baseball games with the adults and grandpa and grandma were busy. . . carrying their folding chair and umbrella and went to watch baseball, and so that was okay. It was during the summer and we couldn't worry too much about what to do. And yet, Inez Nagai was trying to organize a school program during the summer. She said it's okay.

IRITANI: Before we go too far along, I want to just show, this. I hope it can be seen. Mary taught this Issei adult English class, during July and the people wanted to tell her, "Thank you." And these are all the names of the Issei.

TSUKAMOTO: That was a very happy experience. Teaching these elderly Isseis who had never had the opportunity to learn. Some of them were so old they could hardly hear. They could hardly see, and their gnarled hands were not used to holding even a pencil. But they were eager to listen and learn and I don't know how I taught, or what I taught. But anyway, we tried to teach them things that would be courtesy expressions and everyday English. And then there was one lady who had thick glasses, and said, "I want to write my own letter to my son in the war. I've always had somebody else to write for me. And I wanted to do my own writing." So I had a very happy experience teaching the adults English. And that was

TSUKAMOTO: one of the things that I enjoyed doing. But another thing that I did was teach public speaking. The only course I had, I felt confident in teaching, and Mr. Learned sent me a book. One English book of verses and things, so I would then use that to teach them how to speak and I remember it was a conglomeration of youth and adults, young people and children who were interested in public speaking. And we didn't even have a classroom, but we sat on the floor of a shower room that wasn't completed. So there were parts of the camp that wasn't even finished. But we started our classes. And I remember for Fourth of July, they wanted to have some kind of a program. So you know what I decided? They're going to learn the Gettysburg Address. And that we had Henry Sugimoto, who was an artist, paint us a big, big flag as a backdrop. And we were going to say the Gettysburg Address, as a verse chorus, together. So we practiced pronouncing the words and expression, and saying it slowly so we're all together. And so I was proud of the group. And when the program was over, somebody came up to say, "What do you think you're doing? That makes no sense, living in a confined place like this you want to talk about Lincoln's Gettysburg Address." And I kept saying that, "From these honored dead, shall rise a new birth of freedom." And I said, that from here, "the government of

TSUKAMOTO: the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish."
We'll never forget that, and hang onto it. So I was like a crazy, naive kid that believed that no matter how bad things were, I wasn't going to turn against the country, or Lincoln, any other faith that people had. To hang in there in our democracy. And I tried to teach that. I don't know whether those who learned the Gettysburg Address ever thought of it, but anyway, that's what I did. [laughter]

And then, of course, after that my arthritis elbow got so bad, I had to go to the hospital, and Dr. Hashiba put it in a cast. And so I could hardly walk. I had to hold it like this. And while it was in the cast, I decided I can't teach like this, so I quit teaching. So it was just a few weeks that I taught. But it was a very enlightening experience.

And then I found out that they had quietly. . . .
Different people had been busy. They carved little tiny wooden clogs. And somebody gave me that with a pair of clogs on a safety pin. And I thought, "Oh, that's cute. I wonder why they did that." Never thought of it all these years until recently I read, "*Kawaii kodomo ni wa tabi wo sase.*" "If you love your child, and you feel that love, worth, and value of that child, be sure to allow them to travel." And here we were confined with barbed wire fences. And the Issei who carved that out of a scrap of

TSUKAMOTO: wood, must have been aching to say, "we love our children, we want them to travel far." Well, how far can we go, surrounded by barbed wire fences. And soon, everybody was carving these little wooden clogs, and I bet half of them never understood why they were wearing it, or why somebody carved it. But this was the heart-cry of some of those who worked, who lived with the Japanese cultural background. And these are the things that we were beginning to be surrounded with. And it's taken me a long time to finally comprehend the values that come from our cultural roots. It began to seep into our life even in Fresno. But the artificial flower classes, the embroidery, the crocheting classes, the painting classes, and different kinds of art activity that different people did. And the beautiful carving of vases and wooden carving things, brought them forth into an art exhibit that I will never forget. It was a very enlightening, heart-warming thing that came out of these little barracks where you thought people just spent time just crying and doing nothing. They were creating. And out of their outcry for longings of their cultural background, they were expressing beauty and love for things beautiful. And so we were learning. And that continued on in Jerome. And Al was. . .

IRITANI: When did you leave Fresno?

TSUKAMOTO: Well, October 16th, [1942] we found out. My brother George left in September with the early group of young men. Dr. Taira went with them [as a vanguard team]. But they were to help build and help hasten the building. So these young men went ahead. And then in October they told us to come on. So we took the train, a rickety old train. And the camp mess hall gave us bags of snacks to take on our trip. Half way over, those snacks were gone. And we were really hungry by then, because often the dining car was not connected at the right time. So at ungodly hours we were awakened to eat. [Laughter] Whenever the diner car got caught up. So, there were times when we felt that we had skipped our meals. They couldn't give it to us. So we needed these snacks, so this is what we had. [It took] us five days and four nights.

IRITANI: And you were often put on a side rail. . .

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. Often. We were wondering how come? But the fast trains that needed to go by. The soldiers on the train. They were the emergency trip that couldn't be held back. And we were just expendable. We just sat off to the side to wait. And so here we were, five hundred on a train. Five hundred. Crowded and we slept, Marielle. . . on the one bench we slept like this, but Marielle slept like this, and Al and I like that. But we didn't have a sleeping bed. And we

TSUKAMOTO: just slept on the couches. So that was the way we managed to get to Jerome.

But the sights we saw. One time they let us off in New Mexico. And there was nothing there. Barren place. The soldiers sure were out there, lined up. We were shocked that there were so many soldiers watching just us, you know. And they expected trouble when they let us out. Well, we were just anxious to stretch our legs, and we were anxious to see each other. Some of them, we didn't know who was on the train. We just kind of lived with the one car at a time.

And the restroom, I remember, was it Sonny or Lester, one of them had measles or scarlet fever, and the Ouchida family was confined in this bathroom. So our bathroom was used, so we had to go to the next one. So we had to go to the next car, because this one was occupied. [Laughter] Oh, gosh, poor Edith and Harold. Well, anyway, it wasn't funny, but that's what happened. And so we finally got to Jerome. But we went to Tennessee, Nashville, and we crossed the Mississippi, and we crossed it back again. You know, the crazy way we traveled. And then we went down the edge of Arkansas.

And then we saw the hovels the black people lived in. It was Sunday morning, and here was this fella dressed in a

TSUKAMOTO: nice suit walking with a shiny brand-new pair of shoes in his hand. Walking barefooted, to church. Because, we said, he probably will wear the shoes when he gets to church. But we didn't get over the kind of environment we saw in the deep south. Yeah, and realized, we were better off in a way.

IRITANI: I think you're pretty tired.

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, it's okay. Three thirty.

IRITANI: We'll still move along then.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, we can.

IRITANI: Let's just show a few of the pictures here.

TSUKAMOTO: Well, we got there in October, and it took us until November, December, to sort of organize life in Jerome. But we were pleased, oh gosh, we had floors this time. It wasn't asphalt. It was wooden floors. And the walls, it had an asphalt, no not asphalt, plasterboard walls were in. So that there was an outside barrack wall and a plasterboard. So that there was more insulation and nice glass windows and screens. We were real delighted. And then, of course, one light, but, in the corner there was a closet. But we couldn't figure out how come the closet was that low. And when we went to the mess hall the tables were so little and the benches were so low, we just couldn't. . . . And then the carpenters who had been working there. "You mean you

TSUKAMOTO: people are going to come here? They said little brown people were going to move here.

IRITANI: [Laughter]

TSUKAMOTO: And so the cultural shock was on both sides. We found out that they were disappointed that we weren't so little. But the closets had to be all built up and the mess hall benches had to be raised someway.

IRITANI: So they fixed it all up.

TSUKAMOTO: They had to. [Laughter] These were shocking things that we found out about that.

IRITANI: Well, we'll just show your. . . .

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, that's Nami and Julia along side of the barrack.

IRITANI: I guess it [referring to the video camera lens] doesn't want to adjust to it [the photograph]. Anyway, that's how the barrack looks in the back.

TSUKAMOTO: And so in Jerome, we had a firewood emergency. A few weeks after we had arrived, it was already turning cold. And every barrack room had a potbelly stove. And every potbelly stove had to be fed through the night to keep us warm. And so the project director was shocked to find out that we were using so much firewood. And soon the pile of firewood for each block was gone. And so he declared an emergency and ordered all the men who were in the post office, and the offices, and in the kitchen, cooks, to have the

TSUKAMOTO: women take their places and go off into the woods. So the men were all out in the forest, and they had a great time.
[Laughter] They came home. Al had a barrel with a screen on it. And he brought a flying squirrel.

IRITANI: Oh-h-h.

TSUKAMOTO: They had never seen animals like that. And then they talked about catching all kinds of things. And they even saw a water moccasin, but that's poisonous. They had a lot of rattlesnakes. And they found out when the Hawaiian people came [1,500 Hawaiians came later in 1943], they never saw a rattlesnake before.

IRITANI: Of course.

TSUKAMOTO: And they enjoyed eating teriyaki rattlesnake.

IRITANI: That's good.

TSUKAMOTO: Everybody ran around and said, "Did you ever taste that?" And then they found out that in the block, Hawaiian' block, they constructed a cage. And in it was a great, big rattlesnake. And the camp officials were horrified to think that they kept it in a cage because the wire mesh thing that was in front was not really so secure. And they said it could hurt somebody. They outlawed it. They said, "Don't do that anymore because it was very dangerous for the public." But anyway, they never saw a rattlesnake around after that. They were having a great time. And Al said before long.

TSUKAMOTO: nobody saw rattlesnakes in Jerome, but there were water moccasins and all kinds of things and strange animals. Not only the flying squirrels. They had all kinds of *nezumi* [mice], different kinds of chipmunks and *nandatta kane* [what was that now?] woodchucks, and all kinds of things besides birds. But anyway, the boys, they said they had so much fun, I don't know how much wood they cut. But they had a horse-drawn sled to deliver these logs that they had cut. Then you know who did the sawing? The women. Put these wood in these little saw horses or something, and they were the ones that were sawing the wood. I think you saw that.

IRITANI: I think we have a picture of that. There was a picture of that in one of the newspaper articles.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, the St. Louis Post Dispatch had it. Well anyway, this is how we managed to go through the emergency. And after that, they kept up a regular crew cutting wood so that they would never run out of firewood. But after that kind of emergency was over January set in, and it was very cold, bitter cold, freezing, and ice and frozen ground, and everyone experienced all of this. And then we had Mr. Uyeda died. He was in Block 9, our block. And he was very seriously ill. They rushed him from Jerome to Rohwer hospital because its twenty miles away. But they had more

TSUKAMOTO: whatever, more facilities, but he didn't survive. And then Mr. . . it was Mr. Iwatsuru [from Elk Grove]. Old man was a grandfather, he died. So all this began to affect us. Funerals, and the winter cold, and the shock of a new place, and getting adjusted to life here. So that psychologically we were hit real hard. And we were down at the bottom of the pit, when January came. Then the military decided by then that they would check us on our loyalty and recruit volunteer Nisei soldiers!

IRITANI: Oh, that happened.

TSUKAMOTO: It started by March.

IRITANI: That was 1943.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. They came in and see they hit us when we were down. Psychologically, we were disappointed and frightened and down at the bottom of the pit, when they decided they'll turn around and ask us about our loyalty to this country. And we're shocked because many of us said, the only reason why we came was to show our loyalty. We were already saying that we are loyal, that's why we're [evacuated and interned], to support the country. We were going to obey. So that's already done. And here they want to ask us again. So people were angry. Al and I decided that we're here no matter what anybody says, we're never going to turn against this country, so we're going to stay. We're

TSUKAMOTO: going to vote "yes-yes." We talked to Grandpa, Grandma, my Dad and Mom. They all agreed that they would stay and those grandchildren are here, we're going to die here. We want to stay loyal. So there was no question.

But it was the families that had questions and doubts and disagreements that fought in these little barrack rooms that was a terrible, terrible thing. They ran around whispering. They didn't know who to talk to. Many people came to our house late at night, our relatives and men who didn't know who to talk to. And I remember Al and I talking to them. And no matter what anybody says, you know, we can't be forced to turn against the only country we've got. The only country we have. And if you say Japan, that's a foreign country to you. And you don't know that much about Japan. Would you want to go back? Even the Kibeis, you know, they knew that this still was their country. And so there was a terrible, terrible decision that had to be made at that time. And that ran on for months and months of anguish and bitterness and fighting [within] families. Torn between the son who volunteered already and in the army, the younger son who is very defiant and angry and upset. "If that's the way they're going to treat us I'm going to quit and go back." And go back to where? It was a foreign country for them. But that's what happened

TSUKAMOTO: to some people. And so I never will forget, it took us until September [1943]. So by the time September came. . . I still remember as they got on the trucks, one boy refused to climb on the truck. He cried and his dog was beside him. And he cried and cried and didn't want to get on the truck, and the army person tried to lift him on the truck. He just didn't want to go to Japan. "This is my country." He wasn't old enough. He had to go with his family anyway.

IRITANI: I think maybe we'll stop at this point. We should watch the time a little better.

TSUKAMOTO: That's all right.

IRITANI: I think we'll stop then. We'll see how the tape will be. This switch. Just turn the power off. Okay.

[End Audio Tape 2, Side A, Session 2]

[End Session 2]

[Session 4, October 31, 1996]

[Begin Audio Tape 1, Side A, Session 4]

IRITANI: This is the fourth session we are interviewing Mary Tsuruko Tsukamoto for her oral history interview with the Florin JACL and CSUS Library Archives Oral History Project. Today's date is October 31, [1996]. Halloween.

And before we continue the interview with Mary, I would like to share a few pictures. I can't remember whether we showed Mary's little baby picture. Nine months old in a cute, cute perambulator. Which way? Like that. [Focusing photograph] Okay. She was a cute baby. And then when Mary grew, she was an orator in high school with the help of her good teacher, Mable Barron. And this is a picture of Mary with her trophy. And then after the war she came back and got her credential and taught. Excuse me. Taught in the Elk Grove District and here is a picture of Mary with her class, doing something very interesting. Looks like a village, the town. Looks like they're standing. . .

TSUKAMOTO: That's the third grade geography lesson where they put their family homes in the community and they spotted where they lived and what it looked like from above.

IRITANI: Great hands-on activity. And then Mary, after her retirement, there was a school named for her in the Elk Grove District. Mary Tsukamoto Elementary School. And now here is a picture of Mary and Al in their retirement years. Very good. And then, [in 1976], after Mary's retirement [from teaching in public school], she was approached to be the director of the Jan Ken Po Gakko. Now we want to focus on this side. And there is Mary with the children. Very good. And so Mary, shall we continue your story?

TSUKAMOTO: The Jan Ken Po Gakko was a very innovative program. And it was sponsored by the parents. It was a parents' cooperative group. And it was a summer program. They had a vision that their children needed [a change]. They needed something they weren't getting in the public schools. The Japanese American kids were growing up in America weren't getting enough of the material that would give them a sense of self esteem and pride in their heritage and who they were. So that's what they wanted to focus on. A program that would be fun, more like a game, and a lot of fun. But still, for four or five weeks, they would get

TSUKAMOTO: together during the summer, and learn about their parents and ancestors and about the Japanese Americans. And that by meeting resource people and the teachers in the community, they would begin to identify who they were, and learning a little bit about the language and songs and things. They asked me to be the director. And there was no curriculum. And I had to think about how I would write that up and prepare a program that teachers could follow.

I had been a long-time member of the Association for Childhood Education, and we had a plan of action. And in it, they were trying to teach the children to learn to be proud of their own potential, and that they would grow up becoming somebody that was really special. And so we tried to use that kind of an idea in teaching them Japanese [children's] songs and a few words that they could use, and words of courtesy, and taste Japanese foods. And so there were all kinds of programs that we started to initiate. Much of it was art [and music, Japanese songs,] and activities making things--cooking and tasting food and creating lovely things that they could enjoy that was part of Japanese art.

[I was profoundly reminded of the hidden reservoir of cultural teachings Kohana Sasaki had given me. In 1977, Al and I decided to visit her in Los Angeles. She was

TSUKAMOTO: delighted and brought together much, much more that would excite the five to twelve year olds.]* In the course of this Jan Ken Po Gakko Program, one of the important things was the parents wanted somebody to begin to tell what happened during the war! Even their own parents [and grandparents just turned away with tears and silence and] wouldn't tell them, and so the Sansei [third generation] parents were so frustrated, they hoped that by this program, I would. . . or somebody would begin to tell what really happened in '42 to '45.

Well, I started to hurriedly collect pictures and buy some packages from the [National] Archives. There weren't too many. But [there were] only pictures that showed what the Army took that showed that we were suffering and being herded together and taken into the internment camp. Everybody with the terrible look of fear and emotional suffering like the teenagers that didn't know what was going to happen the next day. [Photo of a fearful teenager] And it was exactly the way we felt. And little children were bundled up and had to wait and wait and wait by the bundled baggage. And this is Miyo, and she was. . . this photograph's been used all over. Nobody really knew who she was. But here she was, three years old.

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

TSUKAMOTO: And then years and years later, fifty years later, we found out she [has become] a Dean of Women at the University in Illinois. And she remembers what a traumatic, terrible experience it was. There were mothers with little babies, not knowing just how she would survive and how the baby would be fed and reared in a strange place that they were going to be sent. Nobody knew where. It was just a frightening sense of not knowing what's going to happen the next day. So it was truly a nightmare. We didn't know how else to describe the shocking report that came from the President [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] that Executive order 9066 was signed and that all of us people of Japanese ancestry living on the coast of Washington, Oregon, California and Arizona had to leave. And the Army was in charge. And General [John L.] DeWitt assigned as the head of this important position. And so there were soldiers all over the place with guns. And many children, who heard my story [during my talks from 1985] listened and worried. "You mean the soldiers with guns and bayonets, were they mean to you? Did they poke you? Did they hit you?" And I said, "No, look at this picture that I found." And I was glad I found this picture [in circa 1988] because he's just a kind American boy. He's just like your uncle and your brother in your homes. And these were the soldiers that

TSUKAMOTO: were doing Uncle Sam's job. They were told to do this duty. And many of them were unhappy doing it. But in the meantime, they were human, friendly, and warm, and kind to children and people. So we understood that. But still the government's word of being suspected and not trusted, and be told to move out of the West Coast was a shocking truth that we had to accept. And we didn't know how long we would be gone. But when the children heard my story [in 1977] as I tried to tell them how the Isseis were so brave and wonderful, and they were decent and hardworking and honest, wonderful people. I needed to teach the children what kind of people the Isseis were. Our parents. Many of the children that were there, were great grandchildren of the Isseis that I knew in Florin. I said, "I knew your great grandfather and mother. They were wonderful, kind and very thoughtful people. They worked hard and they were decent and honest and fair. Then some of the kids got up and said, "I can't believe you. You must be lying. How can they be nice and good if the government decided that they couldn't trust them, and put them all away and lock them up for three years? They must have been spies or traitors! How could they have been so good and decent if the government couldn't trust them. They must have had a good reason. There must have been a reason for all 120,000

TSUKAMOTO: people of Japanese ancestry being locked up. Aren't we supposed to be ashamed that they were traitors and spies? How can we believe you?" And so I was so shocked when they said this, I didn't know how to tell them. And I realized that our silence for more than forty years gave them the sense that we were hiding something. That none of us knew how to begin to tell the shocking experience that Executive Order 9066 thrust upon the people of Japanese ancestry, and only those of Japanese ancestry. We were singled out. Why wasn't Italians and Germans, too? We were at war with Japan, Italy and Germany. Many people said that. "How come just Japanese people? You must have been guilty of spying." And so I knew the truth had to come out. And I knew that some way, we had to find the courage to stand up and answer the children whose penetrating truth began to gnaw at me and make me realize that I'd been wrong, I'd been hiding myself, and that I'd been lying to myself that it was okay. That what they did to us during the war was okay. That somehow the Japanese cultural trait that my father taught us said that no matter what they do to you, just bite your lips and grin and smile, and don't hurt the ones who hurt you. And so we knew that we couldn't point our fingers at the government. We couldn't accuse them of doing anything wrong. I felt that it

TSUKAMOTO: was shameful to even try to do that. But finally in 1978, after years, Edison Uno and others had worked and campaigned to try to get redress on the agenda. The [JACL] Convention in Salt Lake City voted. It was not really a broad majority, but very close. But the JACL finally stepped forward with courage to say, "Yes, we must go for redress." It was after Edison Uno had died suddenly of a heart attack. Those who followed him. . . . Min Yasui knew that we needed to carry out the truth. It had to be brought to the American people. [Clifford Uyeda our newly elected National JACL president believed it was right to go for Redress.]* And if we didn't speak out, many people will believe that we all deserved to be locked up. And that the government did what was right. And so with all of these feelings that we had, we worked hard to try to teach the people that it wasn't true. But there were many, many reasons that we found out years later.

The Commission [on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, CWRIC, a Congressionally created body in December 1981] was organized and they went around to ask people what really happened to you way back in 1942? It was so hard to know where to begin.

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

TSUKAMOTO: We didn't know what words to say or how to tell what happened to us. But 750 people came forth to speak to the Commission. And their five minute testimonies were recorded on the tape recorder. And then the book called *Personal Justice Denied* came out and it was presented to the Congress in [1983].

But in the meantime, a wonderful person named Aiko Yoshinaga Herzig had been a Commission researcher and had worked hours and hours to research in the [National] Archival office [in Washington, D.C.] And there one day, as she was searching for something on her own family, she found this strange looking old book on the corner of the desk. And she picked it up and thumbed through the pages. And she said, "I nearly hit the ceiling. For during the Commission's report, we had heard that General DeWitt had burned the ten books that he first published. And it had to be done over." And she wondered what the cause of it was. But on the margin of these pages, John McCloy, General DeWitt's superior, had ordered, "You can't publish this book." This evacuation of the Japanese from the West Coast, written by General De Witt [makes] the government racist. You can't [let people believe] the government was racist in treating the Japanese people. You must rewrite that part of it, and that it has to

TSUKAMOTO: be corrected. This paragraph that says, "No matter how long time we have, even if we took every single individual to court, we would never know who's loyal or disloyal, because people of Japanese ancestry are like that. You could never divide them between goats and sheep." And so, General DeWitt had written these statements in the books and John McCloy would not accept it. But Aiko Yoshinaga's discovery was presented to [Dr.] Peter Irons who was a distinguished professor, and his picture is right here, as he published this book called, [*Justice Delayed: The Record of the Japanese American Internment Cases*, in 1989.] He brings these other young fellows [young Sansei lawyers and Min Yasui, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Fred Korematsu] who accused the government of wrong-doing, and tried to challenge the Constitution [up to the Supreme Court.] He brings them back to the court in San Francisco [in 1984], and Fred Korematsu's case was won and [thrown out by Judge Patel] because he proved that DeWitt had really tried to disclaim the action. And by destroying evidence [and rewriting history], they were hiding the truth. And so with all these discoveries that came out, these people, all of them, proved what the Commission's final report was. The whole thing happened because of race prejudice of the people of America at that period.

TSUKAMOTO: Forty years before the war, there were laws that were passed that were discriminating. My father couldn't buy land nor could he become a citizen. All these discriminating laws affected the minds of the people so they were prejudiced. So, the terrible thing about race prejudice, it kept them from thinking wisely. And so the people's sense of race prejudice, and then the war hysteria caused by the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan, and then finally, all of these leaders at that time in our country, President of the United States Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John DeWitt, who was in charge of the West Coast, President gave him the powers to handle the whole situation. There were people like Walter Lippman, the well know journalist and news reporter, who spoke very articulately about the fact that the Japanese were suspicious people, and that there would be a fifth column threat if they don't hurry up and get them out of the way. And Frank Knox, the Secretary of Navy, and John McCloy, his Undersecretary, assistant, and Earl Warren who was Attorney General of California, [determined] to become Governor of California, [was elected,] and eventually, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. He was a young man and with this ambition to be elected in November of 1942, he campaigned and said, "The Niseis are worse than the Isseis."

TSUKAMOTO: We got to get them together, and round them up before they do what they plan to do. To threaten our security of the West Coast." So our political leadership failed us. And because of those three items, [race prejudice, war hysteria, and failure of the nation's leadership] 120,000 people were interned during the war. All of this happened because of these three basic faults that caused the terrible Constitutional violation. And the report from the Commission shocked the nation, and many people couldn't believe it. And we couldn't believe that our Constitution didn't [inaudible] it. [Reading from a chart of the Preamble] "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, to establish justice." All of these things were stated with such great noble words didn't make any difference to us at that time.

And so when the Smithsonian had a chance to tell the story of this terrible experience, when they were ready to celebrate the 200th anniversary [of the United States Constitution], it was in 1987. I remember working on the Sacramento City Bicentennial Commission. And I reread the Preamble and the Bill of Rights. And I was shocked to suddenly realize. . . I'd been trying to write a book about Florin and Mrs. [Elizabeth] Pinkerton and I knew that we must write a book about "the strawberry fields of Florin",

TSUKAMOTO: because we were so sad to think that the community had died, and there were no more strawberries. And that that's what we needed to bring to the attention of the people. But, when I served on this Commission for [Sacramento County Supervisor] Illa Collin, and served on the Commission that attracted distinguished Americans in the Sacramento community, when I reread the Preamble, "We the People", I began to realize "We the People" means me, too. That for a long time I felt like I was just a guest here. That I don't belong as a part of "We the People". But when I realized that this meant me, too, I realized that it was wrong of me to not embrace the responsibility of an American citizen. And so, because of that sense of hesitancy, I couldn't accept the fact that "We the people" was part of me, until the Smithsonian decided that their exhibit was going to feature the internment story. Because when they told the story of the soldiers who gave their lives for this country during the war, their heroic deeds were done in spite of the fact that their own family and parents were still locked up by the country that they were fighting for. And they were liberating other communities in France and Italy while their own family were not liberated. And so when they decided that this is why we must call this exhibit not just "And Justice for All", but we're going to call it, "A More

TSUKAMOTO: Perfect Union." A dream that our country can be more perfect. A hope that in the 200 years we wouldn't continue to violate that dream just as was done during the war when from '42 to '45, we didn't have a country that promised a perfect union. And so it was a challenge that Dr. Roger Kennedy [of the Smithsonian Institution] meant to give to the American people, and shake them up to make them realize the country did an awful thing. And this is why this exhibit, "A More Perfect Union: the Japanese Americans and the United States Constitution" was opened for exhibit on October 1st, 1987. And I remember how Florin worked to gather the strawberry boxes with Florin, California on it, and the groups of people that worked in the berry patch and the field. My mother wearing the cap, bonnet and picking strawberries. All this was opened at the Smithsonian. And so, [Dr. Harold Langley] had come to Florin to help select the things that were to be used. [And we met Dr. Tom Crouch] in San Francisco to identify more things that were to be used for the exhibit. And it's 10,000 square feet space was devoted to this exhibit. And [then] many people criticized the Smithsonian for bothering to do such a thing. And they were still looking at us as people, not of America, but a foreign country. And so, Dr. [Roger] Kennedy said, "That's precisely the reason why we're going to continue to

TSUKAMOTO: do this. And we're going to tell them again and again that we didn't do it well the first time, but we're going to keep trying to make it a better country than it can possibly be, because we're going to work at it." And so with that kind of determination, I learned a lot.

And so you can understand why my book was changed from "Strawberry fields of Florin" to "*We the People: the Story of Internment in America.*" And so in 1987, a few days before the Smithsonian opened, my book with Elizabeth Pinkerton as co-author came out. And then, the years and years of frustrating publicity and mass media really criticizing the Smithsonian, it has still kept its course. And they are still showing the Smithsonian exhibit and many children from Elk Grove and our schools have been attending and are impressed with what the lesson is. [On June 7, 1997, children from the Mary Tsukamoto School, Marielle and I enjoyed the Smithsonian.] We've learned of many, many people's story what an internment's bitter legacy has been. Where elderly people and sick people were helped on the train. And that we, for those who remember, cried buckets and buckets full of tears [during the Commission hearings]. And that there were many dedications and remembrance meetings [since then], and reunions and gatherings at Tule Lake and Manzanar and

TSUKAMOTO: other places, where we remembered how much we have cried. Ron Wakabayashi, the Director of the National JACL for a number of years, said that when he attended the Commission hearing in San Francisco at the Golden Gate University [in August 1981], where all of us were bussed from Sacramento to go and testify, he said, [he wrote in the Pacific Citizen, the JACL's newspaper] "As we sat there listening to the five minute testimonies, I have seen more Japanese American tears in the past three days than the prior years of my life combined. I have seen *bachan* tears and *ojiichan* tears, and my own. It is not that the Japanese Americans do not cry easily. Stoicism is a stereotype. We cry at all the ordinary human pain that must reach all of our lives. That in 1981, we cried for ourselves. We cried for each other's pain of 39 years ago. Thousands of tragic stories were told. Thankfully, we survived all of them, and the adversity that saved us. But we cried for all that adversity. It was so unnecessary. We know more than anyone else how unnecessary all of that was. Others can recognize that injustice. We can feel how unnecessary the injustice was." And so, in his eloquent words, Ron Wakabayashi described the feeling we had as we cried for each other. [Reading from the article] "And we knew before an old man said anything we knew exactly what he was

TSUKAMOTO: suffering through. So these were the years and we will never be. . . we will never be the same. We will never forget the pain." And so with all of this, I'm so happy that in 1988, [after] years and years of working--ten years--[we won Redress.] Florin JACL, along with all the other leaders across the nation, [helped with a grassroots massive campaign] We got people writing letters to senators, we got many church friends and Caucasian teachers and our school district people and elected officials like Mayor Anne Rudin and Illa Collin-- they all wrote letters to the Congress. Every single one of them received a letter from Mayor Anne Rudin on her stationery urging for justice and urging that the right thing would be done for those who were wronged. So terribly wronged. And so finally the day of justice came when President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. I remember 200 of us were asked to fly [to Washington, D.C.], and we wept as we witnessed the signing. We couldn't believe after all those years, that was the moment which we saw which made [the United States] a nobler country, because it had the courage to admit something that was not easy to do. Something that President Reagan didn't. . . wasn't responsible for personally, but as a President of the nation, he was. . . he needed to accept this responsibility to change the history

TSUKAMOTO: that made this democracy a more hopeful country. And so, we witnessed that and then [again there was no fund for Redress!] A couple of years of frustrating disappointment [and frantic effort was renewed because] there were no funds.

A couple of years later, President Bush signed the bill that helped us to use the entitlement fund which Senator Inouye thought of, knew that that would be the one [source] that could be used without another law being passed. And so the entitlement fund was available to pay for the \$20,000 to all the people who were wronged. And it's taken five or six years. Now here's 1996 and we're just now beginning to see a few of the last ones who have not had their redress checks given to them as promised.

And this is Mrs. Dairiki [of Sacramento.] [Showing photograph] We're so happy that they remembered to call some of the individuals, five or six of the most elderly and the ones that were capable of traveling go to Washington themselves. And on his knees, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh presents the apology and the check. And I think it's symbolic of a noble nation that they would get on their knees to really, humbly express their regret.

[End Audio Tape 1, Side A, Session 4]

[Begin Audio Tape 1, Side B, Session 4]

TSUKAMOTO: And so I think it's a credit to the people who were our leaders at that time to give us that sense of truly expressing a feeling that we never dreamed. We would understand and feel after all the years of tears that we experienced.

IRITANI: Very good, Mary. And what did you go on with after the redress? What else have you done?

TSUKAMOTO: After the redress, there were a lot of things that happened. But one of the things, personally, we were still trying to finish our personal family roots. And so my sister decided that we needed to go back to Okinawa, where our family relatives and some of the descendants still were living, and so we did that one summer. A very unforgettable, wonderful experience traveling with the relatives together to Okinawa. Marielle and all of us were together as we met the Takues who were also from the Dakuzaku clan. They were descendants of different sons of the family. They had four or five sons and each one had descendants and that's what was the only difference, but the Takues decided to change the way they pronounce the same characters that Dakuzaku, my father and mother's family name, so that it won't sound so much like Okinawan. And that's another thing that we [discovered about] Japan, because Okinawa was a country that was independent years ago. Centuries ago they were independent and wealthy because they had

TSUKAMOTO: contact with China and there were visitors from China and gifts from China, and so, Okinawa became quite a notable little island and for that reason, when Okinawa was captured by the Japanese, the clan from the south, I forgot what it was. . .

IRITANI: Satsuma.

TSUKAMOTO: Satsuma clan. [The Okinawans] lost the battle and then they became hostage to Japan. The sense of feeling they were still foreigners, there was prejudice in Japan for many of them had to hide their names, or change their names, or shorten their names, or do something to even be employed. And so, those who lived on the mainland of Japan, felt that this was important to change or to hide the fact that they were Okinawans. So that's how come, though they wrote the character the way as my Dad wrote Dakuzaku, they pronounced it Takue, with the same characters. And so my Aunt who was [Nobu] Oda, decided that her husband's name Dakuzaku wouldn't help her son who was a dentist. So, Tom Dakuzaku changed his name to Tom Oda. So Dr. Tom Oda in El Cerrito is a dentist. But, we said, "Gee whiz, you know changing your name like that we felt proud of Dakuzaku, and George was saying he's the only Dakuzaku left in North America." He said, "I'm not going to change my name." And so, this is the surprise we're finding

TSUKAMOTO: because it's prejudice. And it's old. . . something that was passed long ago. And so the people of Okinawa have always felt shame and hesitance about sharing their culture until just recently. Now you notice that the trend even today, [since about 10 or 20 years,] there's a great deal of interest in the dances and culture of Okinawa. It's more boldly presented. And for the first time in all these years, we're beginning to feel publicly the dances and cultures as being respected and acclaimed. So, I have a sense of joy inside of me, although years ago we just kept it quiet. Nobody talked about the dance Dad knew or the songs they sang, or whatever. We just kept it to ourselves.

So, prejudice and hate is a terrible thing that comes to even the smallest groups of people, even among church people. And so I have grown up learning all kinds of feelings and it's wonderful when we can outgrow it, and become so free. It doesn't matter whether you're Okinawan, or Christian, or American or Japanese. We're just human beings. And this is one of the joys I find in living in America where there is so much freedom. And that's why I feel that I can say anything I want to, if I explain it carefully so people will understand. They will know why I am speaking that way. And for that reason, my book tells about the joy that I feel and the pride I feel, and the

TSUKAMOTO: faith I have in our Constitution. And know that this is a country worth preserving and worth cherishing.

And so when the Jan Ken Po Gakko had their 20th Anniversary Celebration the other day, and I met the young kids who were toddlers and kindergartners, who started out from five year old to twelve year old were those who were in Jan Ken Po Gakko. They had started off that young, and their parents were so delighted to think that they were going to learn a few words like *Ohayo gozaimasu* [good morning], and learn to sing some Japanese songs. And children came home and sang these songs, and grandparents were so proud that they could sing Japanese songs, and eat tofu, and learn how to make udon, and enjoyed it. And so we learned about *gobo* [burdock root], and vegetables that were tasty. And so the children had fun learning to cook and learning to make art things that were Japanese, Japanese dolls, and flower arrangements, and Japanese cultural things, and learn about the festivals, and learned what it meant when they flew the carp on the boy's and girl's festivals, and for *Tanabata* [the festival of the Weaver Star] they wrote prayers and tied it on the trees, and they did all these things, and sang, and we took field trips to Angel Island and took field trips to Okei's grave [at Gold Hill, California. Okei came with the Wakamatsu Tea and

TSUKAMOTO: Silk Colony in 1869]. And took field trips to Tule Lake. And so, children had many wonderful, enriching experiences that reinforced their self enhancement and self assurance and self esteem. So I was real pleased to meet these kids though many of them are college graduates and very eloquent speakers. They had a panel discussion and they spoke about what they remembered and cherished. Many of them had gone to Japan to work, to teach, or to visit. And so they came back with pride and joy and knowing at last they knew who they were. And so that was a joy. These are fourth generation kids.

And so, their third generation parents, too. Their homes changed. They started to decorate things Japanese in their homes. Some of them who were clever, even fixed the window so it looked like the Japanese with the *shoji* decorations. So for many of them, it affected their feelings. After having [learned of] that traumatic internment experience, this was a healing movement that Jan Ken Po Gakko provided. [Many who had intermarried and yonseis who were hapas, had a healing sense of pride and joy.]

And we were so happy to know that it affected [other] communities. So they came to visit Jan Ken Po Gakko. I remember when we were teaching, they would come and observe and see what we were doing. And the Daruma no

TSUKAMOTO: Gakko in Berkeley started, and Suzume no Gakko in San Jose, and Tanpopo Gakko in Stockton. . . all of these and many, many others have mushroomed everywhere, because it is a wonderful way to help children bridge the sense of belonging to Japan and to the United States. And this is the conviction I've gained.

Now through all these years, after I retired from my public school, one of the profound things that we discovered--human beings remember and long to renew friendship and wonder what happened to the ones they loved or cared about. And so the reunion idea got started. We first started out with Mrs. Kohana Sasaki, for just the church people. We felt so badly that they were sent to Tule Lake, [a brief meeting in Jerome,] and then they went to New Jersey. We were sent to Fresno and we got scattered. The church friends were our family. And we had gone to their weddings and funerals and everything. We had known the joy of having children and being baptized and all. So it was a special thing we planned to honor Mrs. Kohana Sasaki. Rev. [Yonosuke] Sasaki had died in New Jersey, and she was a widow. But we wanted her to know how much she meant to us as a mentor.

She had been one of the rare Issei ladies who had gone to a special peeress university and it was *Joshi*

TSUKAMOTO: *Daigaku* in Tokyo. She said that only the Royal Family and their relatives were allowed to go there, but that a few prefectures and big cities had outstanding students who might be selected to attend. And she was one that was selected to go there from Sendai, so she felt very privileged. And she was one that really blossomed from that experience.

And I remember years later is '66, I met Professor Imai, and she told us she remembered Kohana Sasaki. She had been a professor there at the same school. So we knew that she left a profound impression on the teachers. That she learned and learned and learned.

[Kohana Sasaki] had a lot of it in her head and in her heart when she came as a minister's wife. But by then, when she came to Florin, she had 1-2-3-4, four children, and the fifth one was born in Florin. So she had her hands full with little kids. But she was a wonderful minister's wife. She really did her role as a minister's wife.

She took over whatever she felt was her responsibility to educate the girls in the church. The Epworth League, the minister took charge of the boys' and the girls' program, but Mrs. Sasaki was so happy to know that the girls in the church had a King's Daughters Club. And so for that program, she provided us with cultural

TSUKAMOTO: education. She taught us how to serve tofu in a special way that it looked like a chrysanthemum and a lot of cute little decorative ornamental ways the Japanese people liked to serve food. And she taught us a lot of things, how to make *zenzai* [red bean sweetened rice cakes] and a few other things that the girls never forgot how to make good things to eat. But she also taught us how to do *oshibori* which was tie and dye. And in those days, nobody knew anything about tie and dye. But she got this big wash tub of dye material and we took our white blouses or T-shirts, I guess we had T-shirts then. But anyway, we were tying them with buttons and all kinds of things to make designs. And it was an exciting new experience for us. So many things. She taught about flower arrangement and especially about etiquette. [Good manners] was important to her, because she was a lady. And she couldn't get over the rough language we used and the tough country girls we were, because our parents were busy farmers, and very few [Isseis] had college or high school education in Japan. Many of them came when they were teenagers themselves and never finishing school. So we had very little background experience at home. So she had to take the raw materials like us, and try to convert us into ladies. And she did her best. That's why we never will forget her.

TSUKAMOTO: And because she was a church person, often there would be spiritual services and she would tie this into the Bible and the stories. So that we were really blessed, I think, to have had contact with Mrs. Sasaki for ten years. They came in '32, and during the depression we couldn't even pay them. And they decided that they won't move. That they'll stay and they'll be as hungry as all of us are. So that they were willing to work like we worked. And she said if we couldn't pay them, it was okay. Different people brought chickens or vegetables from our farms, and tried to supplement what we couldn't afford to pay them in money. So, in that way they stayed with us. And during that time, I remember how she blossomed. But anyway, she was just a wonderful person.

[Discussions deleted.]

[This deleted section included information on the Rev. and Mrs. Sasaki, their activities and the Reunion honoring Mrs. Sasaki at her 80th birthday in 1978. The Reunion was a gathering of former members of the Florin Japanese Methodist Church. Information on Rev. and Mrs. Sasaki can be found in Session 2 with further information in Appendix A on Kohana Sasaki.]

TSUKAMOTO: We were happy to have [Mrs. Sasaki] come back in [1978]. One hundred fifty church people came back to have our first reunion. No other community talked about a reunion before that. But we were beginning in 1978 to feel the need for something like that. And we were glad we did.

TSUKAMOTO: When we finished, the Buddhist Church people in our community said, "We wanted to be invited, too. You know, we needed to be included." And we realized that we couldn't include them because they weren't our church members, but then my husband said, "Maybe we ought to think about doing a Florin's reunion." Then the job got big. And soon we had about 40 people meeting with us regularly for a whole year. We researched and tried to get more than a thousand names and addresses. And we wrote invitations to all these people and planned a reunion the following year. So in October 1981, we had a big Florin [Japanese American] homecoming reunion. It was a first big event that we did, including everybody in Florin. And more than nearly 900 people came. Different ones. And we were surprised with all the invitations that so many did respond. But some had come from Japan, from all over the United States, we just couldn't believe how they had scattered to relocate in so many communities all over the country. And then when they were coming home for homecoming, I thought, "Gee, you know, maybe I ought to collect some pictures to put up on the walls." Maybe we ought to see. . . . So that was the beginning. After picking up a few things I had started to exhibit for Jan Ken Po Gakko [1977-1981]. I realized that by seeing it on the wall,

TSUKAMOTO: it really shocks you to realize what really happened to our own history. And so with that, I went to town and got many people helping me. And collecting their own [photographs], the albums from their books, enlarging pictures, and making things. So that was the beginning of my historical collection after Jan Ken Po Gakko and then the reunion, the homecoming reunion. And I remember Herbert Kurima and all of them were young enough to help me. And we had quite an extensive exhibit. And everybody was so surprised. The place was packed. And I remember TV people came.

IRITANI: Where did you have it?

TSUKAMOTO: At the Buddhist gymnasium [YBA Hall]. Yeah. That was the only place we could have it. It was the only place the Japanese people still had any control over the property. There was no other building available, because by '78, the Methodist Church group had sold and moved to the Franklin site. They had combined with Sacramento city. [Florin and Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Churches merged and relocated to a site on Franklin Boulevard]. They had done that in '68 with Rev. [Joseph] Sakakibara. There was no property the Japanese owned except the Buddhist Church. That was the only thing. So, we had the use of their property. I don't think they had the

TSUKAMOTO: multi-purpose room then [the new addition west of the YBA Hall]. But anyway, that was later. [The 1981 Banquet was held at the Wood Lake Inn, which was later changed to Radisson Hotel. We filled the Hall with more than 900 returnees! We honored fifty Isseis with speakers Mrs. Kohana Sasaki and Mr. Riichi Satow.]* We had such a successful. . . . We had attempted our first reunion in October 1981, and we had the sense of what I had emphasized at Jan Ken Po Gakko. And what I had found I needed to use in my [own] book, [*We the People* in 1987], in the *Kotobuki*. [the congratulations] And the sense of the pine, the plum and the bamboo. All of these things were then incorporated. I wrote them and I had that translated.

IRITANI: Show this and then you can read this dedication.

TSUKAMOTO: [Reading from the first Florin Japanese American Community Reunion Souvenir booklet and Directory of 1981.] "This tree represented the Isseis and how they thrived like the noble pine tree, ancient and strong, from the land of their birth, the Isseis came. They struggled with courage and endured. Bravely, they established deep roots in the strange new land. Tirelessly, they made their toiling in the berry fields and grape vineyards of Sacramento County. In spite of the harshest treatment, discriminated

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

TSUKAMOTO: and suspected, they quietly produced food from the soil. Long after those tragic years of internment, they endeavored to make a good life for their children and their children. Proudly they, too, gave their utmost. Loyally, Niseis their sons offered their lives as a supreme sacrifice to win the war and to gain freedom for their family. We admired their indomitable spirit as pioneers in our country's history. We accept with deep humility their cherished legacy. We honor them at this historic Florin area reunion by dedicating this commemorative booklet to all the Isseis we have known and loved."

And so, this is the book we put out. And by then, you know, I had gotten enough from Jan Ken Po Gakko and a sense of knowing that each family needed to have a family crest. And so we began to. . . my husband and the chairperson for the Isseis wrote letters to Bob Matsui and Illa Collin and the Sheriff. And then see, we began to feature our family crest. And so one is the Tsukamoto crest and Takehara crest, Takeoka, is it?

IRITANI: No. Dakuzaku's and Tsukamoto's.

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, Tsukamoto's. Okay. So we started off with that. Briefly wrote our history and in this way each of our families used a page, we paid a hundred dollars. And with the hundred dollars we bought. . . we decided to use the expense to

TSUKAMOTO: publish this book. But in publishing it, and many people were so appreciative, and many of them had just simple little information, but anyway, and some advertisement, we made over two or three thousand dollars extra, after the reunion was over. People left money and were grateful for the reunion idea that they just couldn't give enough. And so we had lots of money afterwards. Also we tried to collect the history of the baseball group, and Elk Grove had a baseball team, and every group put out whatever they remembered, they cherished. And so this was the first book. And this was a great experience, because many people were sorry they didn't contribute to it. When they saw other people's page, they realized. . . we tried to tell everybody to do it, but not that many people responded until they saw what others did and realized what this collection of souvenir materials would mean.

And so, I tried to encourage people to dig into their family history, but they weren't ready for that, until five years later. This is the profound discovery. Once you do a simple thing like that they learn from it. The next reunion, this is what resulted. Sixty five families did contribute. And this time, the story goes on to [reading from the Reunion Booklet], "A mountain like the sturdy pine of old Japan, our parents, the Isseis, those transplanted into the

TSUKAMOTO: soil of a strange new life, endured, thrived, and grew in grace and beauty. Good seeds have sprouted. Young pines have taken root. Like the Issei parents, the Niseis and their children with their tireless energy and dogged determination, endured, cherishing rich legacies. Believing with pride, no other land is quite like America. In their lifetime, the Nisei families have labored with integrity, sincerely proving with their lives the Isseis' great dreams in America, truly a land of opportunity and a better life than ours for our children. A healthy pine forest is visible in the horizon. Each tree and its tiny sprout like the energetic Sanseis and their off spring the Yonseis, we see thrilling signs of growth in noble dignity. We witness each succeeding generation strong within the shadows of the original pine. Developing more advantage with steadfast courage, reaching for the stars. We honor and pay tribute to our Issei pioneers and their Nisei children and their Sansei and Yonsei descendants, by dedicating this 1986 Commemorative Second Florin Homecoming Reunion Booklet in their name." So then you will see the difference, what each family did.

IRITANI: So, instead. of the crest. . .

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. This is five years afterwards.

IRITANI: Now you have several stories.

TSUKAMOTO: And we did more about Florin's history, we had found out more since then because at first you didn't know that the first reunion after two or three thousand dollars extra money, we found more pictures to put in there. The important thing we did was, the money that they sent, so much money was given us, that we decided to put a monument to the Isseis. We dedicated the monument on the 1982, October. One year after the first reunion. the Florin area Nikkei Memorial. The community of Florin never recognized the Isseis as being heroic. But we, the Japanese Americans knew what they did. "We dedicate this monument to the indomitable spirit of the people of Japanese descent who labored since 1890 and established the thriving strawberry and grape growing industry. This area at one time was the strawberry capital of our country. And claimed by war hysteria, racism, and unwanted economic competition, Executive Order 9066 was issued during World War II. This Nikkei community of 2,500 persons, a majority of them American citizens were evacuated from the area in May 1942. Florin never recovered from this tragic episode. We earnestly hope that this injustice will never occur in the United States again! We place this memorial in the garden of the Florin Buddhist Church, the only surviving place still preserving our cultural heritage

TSUKAMOTO: cherished by all the people who once lived here. This plaque is placed by those who organized the Florin Homecoming Reunion of October 1981." Dedicated October 10, 1982.

So, let's see, I think there should be something. . . . Yeah, these pictures. . . [Mr. Yamasaki], he's the one that gave us the boulder and we had it moved. Sam Tsukamoto's reading it, and this is at the dedication [referring to a photograph]. Mrs. Chisato Wakayama is speaking. She was the one that translated it into Japanese. [The boulder was moved by J.T. Ross, our good friend Art Butler's son-in-law, who had huge equipment. He moved the boulder from Loomis to Florin and put it in place.]*I better go get Kleenex.

IRITANI: Oh, I have some. Here you go.

TSUKAMOTO: Okay. Thank you. [In 1986, the second Reunion booklet,] you see how profoundly the families expanded their family story. And many of them took two pages and three pages to tell their family history.

IRITANI: Here's one with Shigeno family. And this one has seven photos here.

TSUKAMOTO: See, they needed to provide us the pictures and the facts so that we could make it into a book. And then many of them

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

TSUKAMOTO: had found their family tree. . . their crest. And that was wonderful, and they learned that from the first effort we did five year ago.

IRITANI: Here's the Oshiro family. From the mother and father. Here you have many, many members, Nisei, Sansei, Yonsei.

[End Audio Tape 1, Side B, Session 4]

Begin Audio Tape 2, Side A, Session 4]

TSUKAMOTO: Second, third, fourth generation. So that book clearly brings out the generations, and the fact that the pine did blossom into something that was very profound.

IRITANI: This is the Seno family. Mr. and Mrs. Seno, and the house and the family back in 1930.

TSUKAMOTO: See, now if we had a picture of today, it would be tremendous. Several generations.

IRITANI: Here's the Umeda's with the crest. This must be. . .

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, [Masataro] Umeda family. See Christine and Stan and Issei grandparents.

IRITANI: This is a very, very comprehensive book of the community.

TSUKAMOTO: I think very few people recognize that, and I'm glad I had a chance to show it to you, because, we need to look at it that way to really realize what we're doing. And so, when finally, there was a fellow who said, "Florin's got to have the whole community, not just the Japanese."

IRITANI: Up until now it was the homecoming of the Japanese community, the Japanese American community.

TSUKAMOTO: Now, the Once-in-a-Lifetime Reunion [1985] was the first time that we worked with the Caucasian people, the entire group. And of course, there were just a few of us Japanese representing Japanese American community. George Furukawa and Al and I, [James Abe] and some of the others. But then, I told them about [the Souvenir Book]. And so, we put this together. This is more interesting because it's including other families. They got the idea of what we were doing, so this is the president, and Al's a member of the Florin Historical Society Board. And then, this is the old school, the old school, 1900, early 1900. I think there might have been one or two Japanese kids. I don't know who they are.

IRITANI: Here's [Congressman] Bob Matsui.

TSUKAMOTO: And it was at that dedication, I think the pictures not in there, but anyway, they wanted to do a monument to Florin. And it's written in my book [*We the People*], but they didn't want to mention Japanese. And so they just mentioned, and Al said, he's on the board, he said, "But we raised strawberries and grapes." So they mentioned strawberries and grapes, but never mentioned the people. And they had [Congressman] Bob Matsui come to speak,

TSUKAMOTO: because he is the dignitary from Washington, so he flew in a helicopter. And when he came to speak, he spoke, "My father and mother farmed just a few miles from here on Elder Creek Road." He said all that in dedicating this monument. And this monument didn't say one thing about the people, only that E.B. Crocker named Florin, and a few other people and mentioned the Frasinetti [wine producing] family. But we weren't going to complain.

IRITANI: But it included the Japanese community. Here is a picture of Moon [Herb] Kurima and the baseball team.

TSUKAMOTO: So I thought a few pictures like that might be included.

IRITANI: Your family and you were able to include down here the family picture when you were in camp. And of course, many other families in the community had their pictures as the [inaudible] family. Many, many members of descendants. Once-in-a-lifetime.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes.

IRITANI: So it has not been repeated at all, again? Since that time there was not another reunion of this kind?

TSUKAMOTO: No. There wasn't that sense that we had felt.

IRITANI: Right.

TSUKAMOTO: We had fun at many reunions, but this was a lot of work. So the third [Florin Japanese American] reunion was held in Los Angeles.

IRITANI: This is the Feickerts. I've heard of Feickert from a number of other sources. We're not focusing here.

TSUKAMOTO: This became the third Reunion Booklet [of the Florin Japanese American Community] which our committee after doing the blue one in 1986, we said, "We're so tired." We worked so hard, we didn't want to run another one. Then a few enthusiastic younger Niseis jumped up, and they were from L.A. They said, "Well, we'll do it." So we said, "Oh that's great." Because there was a big group of people that had resettled in the Los Angeles area. And we realized that many of them couldn't come to Florin's reunion. So we said, "Well maybe that's a good idea. We'll go over there." And they could gather their people from there. So they worked hard and in [1988], two years [after our Reunion II], they put on this reunion, and they did a remarkable job. See they still kept the same design and then the cover. I thought they did that very well. And so they had it in Los Angeles in a hotel, the Yerba Buena Hotel. And so we had a wonderful time.

IRITANI: And about how many people attended that?

TSUKAMOTO: Well, it was a pretty big, now let's see. . . I must have had some pictures someplace. Oh, I do have an album of it. I've got albums of all of these. Each of them, I have albums for. Photo albums of everybody that attended.

IRITANI: So again. . .

TSUKAMOTO: So what I should do is, you know, I've kept it. Nobody knows who should keep it. And so I've been keeping it, but I keep asking where shall I put it? Maybe we should put it here. But anyway, it should be kept so people will understand. This is related to that album.

IRITANI: There are many dedications here to the Issei parents as in this case.

TSUKAMOTO: The thing I use a lot from this book is the material they put out. This is where I found the story of Aiko Yoshinaga and that article.

IRITANI: So all this material was compiled by the Los Angeles Committee?

TSUKAMOTO: This is where I got that chart material.

IRITANI: So all this material was compiled by the Los Angeles Committee?

TSUKAMOTO: So there were articles and I contributed some, but they had written it up.

IRITANI: And so, what follows this?

TSUKAMOTO: That was the. . . and then after that we said, let's not bother with any more booklets. [laughter] Just get together and eat. So, we don't want to do anymore fancy things, so then James Abe said, "Let's get together for just a banquet." So James has been handling it, and we've had one at Red

TSUKAMOTO: Lion, but no more booklets like this. And maybe sometimes we had a picnic.

But anyway, these are all other things that we have. This was put out by the JACL in order to raise money for the Redress Project. We needed to. . . we couldn't use JACL money. So we had to earn our funds. And this LEC, Legislative Education Fund was organized, and this is what they published. We sold this and John Tateishi wrote *And Justice for All*. And we sold that. And with all of that money and special contributions and fund-raisers, now like we had Miyori, what was her name? She was a movie actress.

IRITANI: Kim Miyori.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes, Kim Miyori. And we worked with the Stockton [JACL] and clear up to Reno [JACL], and we had a meeting to plan the fund-raiser. And we had a big event at Sacramento City College. And that night she spoke. And we had the dignitaries there and that night we took a few of our exhibit materials and had it decorated in the social hall where they had refreshments and we had different groups bring sushi and things, you know. So we had a big event. We made \$22,000 for LEC. That was the Sacramento Valley JACL. Sacramento and Florin and all of us working together. So we did things like that to raise money for our [JACL] LEC

TSUKAMOTO: project. And then, this is how the historical exhibit started and [was inspired to grow]. And the National JACL and San Francisco Japanese American Historical Society, all of them had started. But then they started to have one in Sacramento called *Continuing Traditions: Japanese Americans, the Story a the People* in 1992. Henry Taketa was chairing it. And he, right in the middle of. . . we were almost getting near the day when we were to put it together, he died. From heart attack. So Toko [Fujii] had to carry on the responsibility. And we finished the exhibit. But Florin, and all of us had our share of taking things in. They built barracks and we had our things built and they even built a *kudo* and all kind of things. Wayne Maeda was chairperson, and we contributed a lot of things to exhibit.

IRITANI: What is *kudo*?

TSUKAMOTO: *Kudo* is a cement, well, I don't know how to pronounce it. We used to cook rice in it. There's a hole on top for the pot. And then a hole in the side for the fire.

IRITANI: Right.

TSUKAMOTO: And when I came from Fresno to Florin, that was the shocking thing, that Mom had to cook rice on it. Everybody did it. And it was supposed to be better tasting than cooking it on a kerosene stove. So, who was it? Gene Itogawa had

TSUKAMOTO: the notion that we've got to build one. So he asked me how it's shaped. And I tried to describe it. And then he had somebody build it. When I saw it, it was kind of funny, because it looked like it was more like a cone. But the real kudo I remember was more flat on top, you know. And then there was a hole for the pot. But it's okay. When I went to see it, I decided I wouldn't say anything, it's too late. But they did build one. They wanted to show how the first people cooked, and so all these things were set up. The Sacramento History Center put out a lot of space for it. And so they set it up. And then I remember it was on for several months. And all of us took turns being. . . we went to help with [the story of our experience.]

IRITANI: You were docents.

TSUKAMOTO: Docents, yeah. It's getting so I can't remember the words. Yeah, docents. We took our turn being docents. And that was very nice. And then, the room where I served, they had the barracks and they had the. . . gee, somebody had built this miniature camp, Manzanar or something, on a stand. We had borrowed it from L.A., I guess. Just wonderful. And then there was on the table, a whole barrack, a miniature barrack, where the wall was taken out. You could look in and see these tiny little chairs and tables, all made to size. Gee, somebody went to a lot of trouble.

All that was exhibited. And so they got things in addition to what people could find from around here, and the pictures on the walls. And so the whole story. . . Mitsuye Endo's photograph, and [James] Purcell and the lawyers who tried to get things solved out in the Supreme Court, then the veterans report and all of that was on the walls.

IRITANI: We attended it. I saw the pictures. We were visiting and it was a comprehensive look at the history of the area.

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, I see. Even on that wall, they had the Jan Ken Po Gakko's banner up there, too. And they had that *Gaman* [television program tape] that [Steve] La Rosa produced. It was just recently produced. And that was shown. And then this book was put together. And it was just the first two or three pages that tells about Sacramento. You know, just these three. Just these pages tell about Sacramento. The rest of it was taken out of that.

IRITANI: I also like this cover.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes, that was taken by an artist that did it. Years ago, in 1969, I participated in the Centennial Celebration, too. That was a long time ago. I represented Florin JACL on this committee. And we worked a long time, George Oki and all the other people, Henry Taketa and all of us worked on this committee to plan it. You saw the picture where I had the Japanese kimono on. Well, that was the night we put

on the entertainment. But that's the time when this artist did the picture about the Wakamatsu group that came. I don't know whether he saw them. He just drew these pictures.

IRITANI: It was from his imagination, because he wouldn't have been there. This was in 1869 when the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony came [to Gold Hill, California].

TSUKAMOTO: So having participated in all these historical things as well as the exhibit, you can see it was natural to go into Redress and Time of Remembrance, because Redress was urgent and Time of Remembrance. . .

IRITANI: Your first Time of Remembrance Program was when?

TSUKAMOTO: '83.

IRITANI: 1983.

TSUKAMOTO: In '81 we did our reunion. In '82 we dedicated the monument. By '83, I just felt like Florin ought to be doing something. And I read that some of the other communities were beginning to have programs on Time of Remembrance. So I said to Florin JACL, "We ought to think of doing something." And so I remember asking one fellow who was Time of Remembrance or Redress chairperson in the [JACL] District. Oh, I forgot his name. [Ben Takeshita, brother of Yuzuru John]. Well, anyway, he came as a speaker. We had a little workshop. Well, that

didn't do too much, after he came. But we needed to perk up, and so suddenly I said, "We got to do something." So then young people in Sacramento, called the NCRR [National Coalition for Redress Reparations] group was very active. Very vocal, young lawyers and all of them. So, I got them to come to my house and we planned jointly, Florin JACL and they would do something for February 19th, 1983. So we decided to call it Town Hall on the Time of Remembrance. And I remember first making the great big sign on justice. Something. I can't even remember what it was I did. But anyway, these great big signs we made and tried to fill the hall and I had a few things to exhibit that was historical things. And then I remembered Masao [Kondo's] artwork I had.

IRITANI: Masao Kondo.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes, Masao Kondo. Ikuko Sato's uncle. She had given me this package [at Jan Ken Po Gakko. She was our interpreter.]* So I used it. Freely exhibiting it, you know. And then somebody said, "Why don't you turn it over to the bank." And that was a big mistake. But this fellow was working for the Elk Grove Unified School District. 1983-84, I met with this fellow, Mr. what's his name [Seizo Oka] from San Francisco came and he took it all. And he said, "You

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

could borrow it anytime." And I haven't been able to borrow it at any old time. and so it's like I lost it. But anyway, that's why when I finally went back, he promised to make a new frame for it so I let him have the ten she gave me. I went and got it back last year, 1995. Christine went with me. So it took me that long to finally get it back. But it wasn't the whole thing. But the first Town Hall meeting I remember, I had ten of Masao Kondo's artwork Ikuko gave me. [These ten are encapsulated and housed at the California State University, Sacramento/Japanese American Archival Collection.]

IRITANI: Was he also in Jerome?

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. That's what Ikuko said. But she doesn't have too much on him. And I wanted a picture of him, and I wanted his life story. But nobody seems. . . she doesn't have anything. So I haven't been able to prepare anything, but I would want to if I could find out.

IRITANI: After you had these exhibits and everything, in the meantime, you have also been going to speak at different places.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. I was surprised that there was such a demand for my speaking that it went along with like '82, '83, '84, and then '85 we had that Once-in-a-Lifetime Reunion. In '86, we had our second big [Japanese American] reunion with the book

TSUKAMOTO: so we were busy getting the stories into it. We were busy getting the story, the history ready. But in between time, they wanted to know more about what happened during the war. So most of it was my experience. They wanted to know my experience. I was speaking to church groups as well as service clubs and school groups, and teachers' groups. So I was busy speaking.

And of course, in the meantime, 1985 and '86, the Smithsonian came. And the National Japanese American Historical Society, and the National JACL thought that I would have something. They heard about what we'd been doing. So then they brought them over to Florin. So then we hurriedly got Teri [Mizusaka] and some of the girls to cook something for supper, because these people were coming one afternoon. And we thought we would collect. I called Henry Taketa and Gene Itogawa and Hannah Satow, and everybody to bring something. And then Mike Umeda, Stan's father brought farm equipment and everything. We just brought everything to the hall to let them see what could be. . . . We didn't know what they wanted. So, I remember taking Obaasan's [Al's mother] old kimono that she brought from Japan. *Montsuki* [a kimono bearing the family crest]. All kinds of things we collected and hurriedly put them up on the tables. They were very impressed.

TSUKAMOTO: Then the next Time of Remembrance, we had arranged for Dr. [Harold] Langley to speak. And that's when I called Loomis and all the other chapters to bring things. And so that day, that time we had all kinds of things. I remember one fellow, I forgot his name, but he even had a carved boat. It wasn't anything he did. Somebody did it and gave it to him, so it didn't have any. . . but it was in camp, so, anyway it was very impressive looking thing. But there were a lot of other things that came. Trunk full of things. And in the meantime, I had gone up to Setsu's place. Her mother. . . *Nandatta ka ne*. (Now what was it?) Kishi, Setsu Kishi's mother, she told me, had a lot of things. And that's where I got the trunk full of things that she had. And even the furniture that her father had built. And he had even a hidden top that had a hidden part that could become a stove. And on top it looked like just a table, a cupboard. But you lift the top up and underneath was a hidden stove. So they did all kinds of ingenious things. They weren't supposed to cook too much in their barracks. So they did all that. And just excellent woodwork. So we borrowed a lot of it and took it to San Francisco. We had truckloads taken to San Francisco. And then Dr. [Tom] Crouch and some of the others came another time to the San Francisco JACL office. And that's when [Selma] Thomas she

interviewed me. Asked me questions and I answered. I never knew what she was going to do with it. She was taping it. And then I found out that that's what they made into a conversation. And so it's ingenious how they used new technology to work out all kinds of things. [At the Smithsonian exhibit, the visitor presses buttons to ask questions of various former internees whose conversations had been taped.]

IRITANI: It's a very, very effective exhibit at the Smithsonian.

TSUKAMOTO: And so they did that with several people on the panel.

IRITANI: Could you tell me Dr. Langley's name and his position?

TSUKAMOTO: Dr. Harold Langley, let's see, is there a copy of my book? He reviewed my manuscript. I wrote something. . .

IRITANI: Was he with the Smithsonian?

TSUKAMOTO: Oh, yeah, He was a curator for the Smithsonian, but I forgot what department. Now, Dr. [Tom] Crouch, he was in another history department or something, but they borrowed him to be in charge of putting this one together. And so Dr. Roger Kennedy hired Dr. Tom Crouch to do the main putting it [the exhibit] together. It might have been his ideas, or anyway, Miss [Selma] Thomas was the one that taped it [the conversation]. And then there was a Jennifer Locke, she's another one that came when they first came to Florin. Well, Jennifer Locke's in charge of this now. See

TSUKAMOTO: because, Dr. Langley is retired from his job. [In June 1997, I met Dr. Tom Crouch. He is now the Director of the Air and Space Museum at the Smithsonian.]* But anyway, Harold Langley came and spoke to our 1986 Time of Remembrance. '87 we had Dr. Peter Irons. '88 was when Dr. Tom Crouch came to be our speaker. '89 we had Bob Matsui. In '90 we had Norman Mineta. So that each time we were focusing on what was happening to Redress in the meantime, you know. But in '88, in March, Dr. Crouch came. In '88, August 10th, was when Redress was signed. So then Bob Matsui was the first one in '89 when he spoke, we found out Redress was won. So it was appropriate that he speak, and Norman Mineta the following year, 1990.

IRITANI: Well, could you mention some of the other places that you go to speak. There are other groups that you speak before as well. You go to some schools, and some organization meetings? Can you think of some. . .

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, I remember I got up early to speak at some men's breakfast, you know, the service men's breakfast. And they have the American Legion's breakfast and they had some veterans of the foreign war, I went to Concord to speak at

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

their breakfast. And then I would speak at the University where I spoke to the, what group was it? The senior citizens of some kind. The audience was mostly elderly people. I forgot what the name of the group was.

IRITANI: The Renaissance?

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, that's right. Renaissance. I spoke to them. That was at the University [California State University, Sacramento.] And I went to the Cosumnes River College to speak. Graduation I spoke, and then they had a Women's Week when they had me speak.

IRITANI: And you've gone to some high schools?

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, oh yeah. In Elk Grove High School, I was impressed. They had all the sophomores in their social studies class. So every sophomore member heard me. But they had it in two sessions so they could get seated in the little theater. And so I did it twice and I showed the slides and spoke, so they couldn't see the pictures on the wall. I had some on the wall. And so I spoke to them. And we couldn't have question and answer like we do for the elementary children because it was too big a crowd. But we did that where we covered every sophomore member of the Elk Grove High School. I remember doing that. Then other times, I was invited by the classroom teacher who taught in social studies. They had read *Farewell to Manzanar* [by Jeanne

TSUKAMOTO: Wakatsuki Houston] or some other book. [I went to McClatchy High School. Once in the auditorium and once in Jim Yokota's class. I went to a high school in the San Juan District two times.]* And they had reason, or they had read my book, and they wanted to ask questions. And then I spoke to Jackman Jr. High School in their assembly. The whole place, the gymnasium was full. And I thought, "Oh, gosh, that's a big crowd." But they were very quiet. And Elizabeth Pinkerton, when she was Principal of Rutter Jr. High School, I did it twice so the whole school heard me in the gymnasium. So she had everybody here. But that was many, many years ago.

IRITANI: And then when did the Elk Grove School District Program begin?

TSUKAMOTO: It took several years. [1983, before the Evening Town Hall gathering, we had our first workshop at the YBA Hall. Half of the Elk Grove Teachers, some Board members and Dr. Glenn Houde came.]* I don't remember whether it was. . . Let's see. We had John Tateishi come to be our keynote speaker at our first Townhall meeting in 1983. And he had car trouble and got late. I remember that. And so different ones were speaking and it wasn't too long of a program. But I spoke and Kiyo spoke and. . .

* Mrs. Tsukamoto added the preceding bracketed material during her review of the draft transcript.

IRITANI: Kiyo Sato Viacrucis.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes, Kiyo Sato Viacrucis. And then somebody else from Sacramento's NCRR [National Coalition for Redress Reparations] fellow spoke [Steve Koyasaki], and then John Tateishi was to speak. And he came late. And so we had him be the last speaker. He was going to be the first speaker. But I remember that was our first event. 1983. Then the next event we had Bill Marutani [in 1984]. See, he was a member of the Commission and so he spoke on, let's see if I could remember that. Something about justice. ["America's Debt of Honor."] He was wonderful. And very humble.

[End Audio Tape 2, Side A, Session 4]

Begin Audio Tape 2, Side B, Session 4]

TSUKAMOTO: And you know, I told him honestly, we don't have too much money. [laughter] We wanted to pay his way, but we couldn't afford it. So he said, "Well, I'm flying to my daughter's place to visit, anyway. So you can pay me from Sacramento to Los Angeles. [laughter]

IRITANI: Oh, very good, because he lived in Philadelphia.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, I know. So, I'll never forget that. I had to. . . I was chairman, I made all the arrangements, contacted him so. I had to tell him we didn't have any money. And then the next year was Dr. [Harold] Langley. No, no. Next year was

TSUKAMOTO: Eric Saul and the veterans. We honored the veterans that night. [1985.] When Bill Marutani spoke [in 1984], we honored the Isseis. We had over, gee, we must have had over fifty or 45 Isseis. We had sushi and special [food] for them. And then Bill Marutani spoke in recognition of the Isseis. And then the next year we had Eric Saul and the veterans. We honored the veterans. And the one that wrote *Go for Broke*. Chet Tanaka. He died just recently [in Hawaii.]

IRITANI: I was wondering about the connection with the Elk Grove School District. You talk to the fifth graders? Do you remember about when that was?

TSUKAMOTO: I know that one or two years we had them come to the hall. And they had a hard time. Florin's school kids walked over. And some of them tried to come with rides, or after school. So that meant we had to be there all the time. And then, Betty [Pinkerton] wondered if we could talk to the Board and see if they could have it some place more accessible to the School District. I think it took a couple of years. I don't remember now what year it was. I must have it recorded someplace. It might have been '84, '85. [It was 1985] I guess when we started to officially have it in the School District Board Room.

IRITANI: Well, you've been doing that over ten years.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, oh, yeah, yeah.

IRITANI: Every day you have two sessions.

TSUKAMOTO: There was a time when I did more than that. It depended on the bus schedule. And finally when the School District got bigger and the busses were limited and they had so many kindergarten children to deliver by so much time, they didn't have the time in between. Then they decided that maybe just two was all they could handle. So that's what happened. So, yeah, it's been more than ten years.
[Twelve years]

IRITANI: And the children are very attentive.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah.

IRITANI: Very good sessions.

TSUKAMOTO: And they come prepared. And I think that's important, because one group I remember, they didn't have time. The teacher, or whatever happened, because they had 'year-round' [school] and they had just come back, and they didn't have time to prepare. And they were restless, and they weren't paying attention. So it makes a difference. So it's better that they come prepared.

IRITANI: So the preparation is also the District's project.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah, they have a [Teachers'] workshop.

IRITANI: Not just the teachers' [project].

TSUKAMOTO: And the District's providing the funds for the bus one way anyway. And each school that does [participate] has to raise money to pay for one way for the bus. And some school's can't do that. So it's a big, organizing plan for many people to even get that much in, which is not very much, but it's something, I think that is memorable to them.

IRITANI: Very impressive.

TSUKAMOTO: Yeah. I'm disappointed that we can't reach junior high and senior high. But I remember what I did with the Jackman Junior High School teacher's class and Mrs. Pinkerton's [when she was Principal at] Rutter Junior High. So I wish I could do that with all the junior highs but I don't know. They have to be willing to do this.

IRITANI: I'm going to show some of these proclamations and plaques that you have received. This is not all of them from your house, and you have said that there are some housed at your [Mary Tsukamoto Elementary] School as well. So this is just a tip of the iceberg of your proclamations and honors. And I'm going to start here. I hope we can get a picture of that. At least the top part shows. The proclamation that says, "Mary Tsukamoto Day, October 26, 1985" And it's signed by Anne Rudin, Mayor of Sacramento. And I'm just going to read it, "Now therefore, be it resolved that I Anne Rudin, Mayor of the City of Sacramento do hereby proclaim

IRITANI: October 26th, 1985, to be Mary Tsukamoto Day in Sacramento." Very good.

TSUKAMOTO: I guess that was during the 50th Anniversary of the Florin JACL. We had a big event. And [Congressman] Bob Matsui was supposed to come. And he couldn't come. So Doris [Matsui, wife of the Congressman] spoke.

IRITANI: Oh, so she came. This one is May 1990 from the VFW. Here's their plaque. And that's a lovely plaque. "In recognition for your dedication in promoting Americanism and patriotism to the youth of our community through the program, The Internment and the United States Constitution." Very good.

TSUKAMOTO: Yes, they know what I'm doing, because they work with me.

IRITANI: They have a group that comes to the Elk Grove School Program each time.

TSUKAMOTO: That's right. A very big part of our program. And the Day of Remembrance exhibit, too.

IRITANI: This one is October, 1990. "Presented to Mary Tsukamoto, in appreciation of your support and dedication to the Japanese American Redress Program. Presented by the Office of Redress Administration, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice." That's very good. And this one, you were "the JACLer of the Biennium, 1984-1986. Presented to Mary Tsukamoto for outstanding service

IRITANI: and dedication to education, civil and human rights." And this heavy one. So big. Anyway, it's a resolution from the Honorable Patrick Johnston, 5th Senatorial District, and the Honorable Phillip Isenberg, 9th Assembly District, "relative to commending Mary Tsukamoto" and after a number of whereases, they say, "Resolved that Mary Tsukamoto be commended for the significant contributions which she has made to the people of the Sacramento community and the State of California, and extend sincere best wishes for continued success in the future." This is October 23rd, 1993.

IRITANI: That's a beautiful plaque. And then this. [A picture of the ceramic wall created by artist Yoshio Taylor.] This is at your school. And you want to tell a little about that?

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. I was so surprised that the Elk Grove Unified School District Board would vote for this kind of a thing, where I would be given a name of a school. And I just never expected anything like that. And I didn't feel that I had done that much for the School District. But, I guess they were counting on all these other things that I had been doing after I retired from teaching. The work that I did with the Time of Remembrance and educating the children and adults on the Internment Story, I guess, may have made a difference. But I appreciated it. A wonderful thing that could happen to a person who is still alive. They kept

TSUKAMOTO: saying that only people who are dead are given a name of a school. So, everybody comes and shakes hands with me and says, "I'm glad to shake your hand. You're still alive."
[laughter]

IRITANI: Well, tell us how this, the artwork. . .

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. You could see that because we are living in America where there is freedom, the flag and the liberty that is promised, the life that I have lived as a Japanese American was liberated. And you can see the important truth that I'm part of "We the People". And the fact that, the wonderful : fact that I'm no longer just a guest here, but a part of responsible citizens. A part of this country. And it's wonderful to be a responsible citizen in the United States where you can become also, "We the People". And I wanted the children to know that every human being who's born in the United States has the responsibility and the joy and the pride in becoming a citizen of a great democracy. But that we have to work at it.

IRITANI: Could you describe what is in that picture?

TSUKAMOTO: Yes. That's an origami crane. It represents peace, and the peace that I hunger for the whole world is expressed in my project with the Peace Event annually, and teaching children to fold origami cranes. And trying to send a thousand cranes to Hiroshima [Japan], and now a

TSUKAMOTO: children's monument in New Mexico. So this was an important message that every child needs to understand. It's not easy to win peace, but that we need to work at it. Like learning to work at folding an origami crane.

And then you see the Daruma doll lifted by the children and the indomitable spirit that never gives up. That is the mascot that we introduced in the school children. And every teacher received the Daruma doll to help the children understand that life is not easy. And that you do get knocked over many times. But it's the most important thing that we can get up every time we get knocked down. That it's the getting up and starting all over again. Doing it over and over again that eventually means success. So the Daruma is an important message.

And the princess ball the other one is holding is one that expresses beauty and patience and perseverance. So all these symbols that expresses part of my background, part of something that is beautiful from my roots. The pine, the plum, and the bamboo are representative of qualities that are important for anyone who can endure and succeed. And so these are all part of the picture. And the fact that the kimono has my family crest, and the fan has the flowering plum, and all of that. The earliest flower that blooms that has beauty and dares to bloom in the harshest

TSUKAMOTO: of winter means that they have courage to bloom beautifully early in their life. So that they won't waste their life, but bless the others who can be part of their life, too. So, this is the. . . and then you see the hand prints of the kindergarten children that were actually. . . Yoshio Taylor, who is the artist who did this designing, decided that every [kindergarten] child will have a tile. And he had them make the imprint. And he noticed that every child, many of them, are representative of diverse community, ethnic background, so they're colored differently. So you see all of the different colored hands of kindergarten children, blessing the entire picture. This has been placed in the front entrance of the school that is named Mary Tsukamoto Elementary School.

And so it will be a reminder of courage and beauty and persistence and determination and never giving up. Really having the faith and the strength to show pride and joy and responsibility for a wonderful country that we live in. Here you see the 9066 [Executive Order 9066], it's torn because democracy has the power to overcome any wrong. If the people in it care about it and are responsible and do something about it. Wrongs will be done only if good people do nothing. And we need to be sure that every citizen that becomes a student at this school will grow up to

TSUKAMOTO: become responsible, caring, do something citizens that will not allow injustice to prevail.

IRITANI: Very good. I think it's time to close. Do you have any final words, Mary?

TSUKAMOTO: Well, I just feel very grateful for this privilege of speaking about myself and I appreciate Joanne Iritani for interviewing me. And I know that this kind of a legacy is something I never dreamed would happen. And I hope that it will bless everybody else who hears it, can use it, and make a difference in what they want to do with their lives. So that we wish that each of you will become thrilled with the possibility, the potential of becoming special in this country.

IRITANI: Very good. I think that is the end.

[End Audio Tape 2, Side B, Session 4]

[End of Session 4]

NAMES LIST

Florin Japanese American Citizens League
Oral History Project

INTERVIEWEE: **Mary Tsuruko Tsukamoto**

INTERVIEWER: Joanne Iritani

COOPERATING INSTITUTION: Oral History Project, California State University,
Sacramento, Special Collections and Archives

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During the editing of the transcripts, Mary wrote in detail of those who influenced her life. Appendices A and B uses parts of the interview transcriptions and new written materials. Appendices C and D were new materials written by Mary. Appendix E was compiled by the transcriber by viewing the video tape of Session Three with added descriptions by Mary. Appendix F was an article found among Mary's photographs and papers and selected for use by the transcriber. Verbal permission to use was obtained from Roy Herburger, Publisher of the Elk Grove Citizen. Judy Tachibana and the Sacramento Bee were contacted for permission to use Appendix G, H and I, the articles published on December 26, 1997 and January 8 and 12, 1998 following the death of Mary Tsukamoto. Letters of permission to use these articles were received from the Sacramento Bee. The United Methodist Review article was received from the author. Appendix K shows the ceramic mural on the wall of the multipurpose building at Mary Tsukamoto Elementary School. Appendix L is the Resume or Vitae written by Mary in October 1997.

MRS. KOHANA SASAKI
MY MENTOR OF JAPANESE CULTURAL ARTS

by Mary Tsukamoto

November 11, 1997

Kohana Sasaki was my mentor of Japanese Cultural Arts. She was a great and unassuming, gentle lady teacher. It was the most significant encounter I had during my growing years that touched my roots and my origins. She came as the wife of Rev. Yonosuke Sasaki with four little children and another baby to be born about a month or two after their arrival to our Florin Japanese Methodist Episcopal Church Mission in 1932. Previously, they had served in Vacaville for a few years after arriving from Japan.

Rev. Yonosuke Sasaki was from Fukushima Ken [prefecture] with ancestors of important noble lineage. He was inspired to become a Protestant Christian preacher and studied to become a minister. Fortunately, he was married to a beautiful lady, a brilliant teacher from Sendai who had come from an educated prominent family. Kohana and Yonosuke Sasaki boldly ventured to come to America and serve the Methodist Mission. Kohana Sasaki was a brilliant student in Sendai and was selected from her city and prefecture as the person to attend a peeress school for the Royal Family and their relatives. Rarely was a commoner invited to study at such a prestigious school as the *Ocha No Mizu Joshi Daigaku* [Women's University in Tokyo].

There she learned and developed, and became a distinguished, cultured, educated lady who walked in unassuming humble, gentle ways. She was a perfect minister's wife.

Rev. Sasaki was a smiling pleasant young man, and preached with earnestness and sincerity. His sermons were not dynamic or powerful, but, he was kind, always smiling, gentle, and loved the children and youth of our church. The Isseis and all members of the church loved and appreciated them.

The Sasaki's taught and conducted a Japanese Language School which was held after our public schools classes on week days. They taught Sunday School, led the Epworth League, a program for the youth on Sundays, and conducted the Sunday Worship Service. It was a heavy load. During the winter months, we often held night meetings in various homes. The Sasaki's worked hard. As soon as the baby was a bit grown, her older children helped to look after the younger ones, and Mrs. Sasaki began to participate in the teaching. She was delighted to find Florin girls were already organized in a King's Daughters Club, *Oh Jo Kai*, for girls from teen to adult. Many who were married returned for reunions and special gatherings.

As large groups of girls gathered, Kohana Sasaki was inspired to teach cultural arts lessons which none of us "country bumpkins" ever imagined possible in Florin. She not only conducted an inspiring spiritual worship, but also taught us how to make delicious Japanese foods, decorating and making them look more appetizing. She showed us how to serve tofu in a special way so it looked like a chrysanthemum, and taught other cute little decorative ornamental ways the Japanese people liked to serve food.

We never had thought of striving for such grace and lovely attention to our food. We only knew what Mom and Pop would serve on the table. Many times Mom was too busy to make anything very fancy. But Mrs. Sasaki talked about nutritious food that was Japanese food, certain food that was good for our health. This she served her children before they had their tests. She tried to remind us that certain food was good for our brain and our intelligence and alertness. So it was quite an education. It was an entirely new experience.

Mrs. Sasaki taught us a lot of things-- how to make *zenzai* (red bean sweetened rice cakes) and other things, so that the girls never forgot how to make good things to eat. She also taught us to do *oshibori*, which was tie and dye. In those days, nobody knew anything about tie and dye. But she got this big wash tub of dye material and we took our white blouses or T-shirts, I guess we had T-shirts then. We were tying them with buttons and all kinds of things to make designs. It was an exciting new experience for us.

So many things she taught about. Flower arrangement and especially about etiquette. This was important to her, because she was a lady. We were learning how to speak to people, and how to treat people kindly. She couldn't get over the rough language we used and the tough country girls we were, because our parents were busy farmers, and very few of them had college or high school education in Japan. Many of them came when they were teenagers themselves and had never finished school. So we had very little background experience at home. She had to take the raw materials like us,

and try to convert us into ladies. She did her best. That's why we never will forget her.

Because she was a church person, often there would be spiritual services, and she would tie this into the Bible stories. When Mrs. Sasaki came, something completely unimagined before happened. She was such a talented person. She rewrote the Bible stories into drama. And that excited the parents. We were thrilled to know Bible stories could be dramatized and put on as a special event. So, Easter time or Christmas or the summer variety show became special during the ten years that Mrs. Sasaki was here. We will never forget some of the things, the plays created with her talent of writing script and making it dramatic. She was such a talented person. It was very interesting.

And of course, I've always had to sit at the piano. I gave the background music. And so I never got to be in the play. But, I was there at every rehearsal. As I sat there at the piano, I was watching all that went on.

And the patience that they had! Rev. Sasaki would build a fire and boil a big pot of *udon* [Japanese noodles]. So that they would be sure that we were fed during the rehearsal. So, everybody would come. And it was just impressive when we think about it. They had little money, but they were willing to do anything to get the young people interested.

But, these kids were more interested in basketball. The social hall had a small sized basketball court, and they would shoot baskets until Mrs. Sasaki had to call them up to the stage for their turn in the play. I realized the hours she had spent writing each script by hand in simple *kana* [the simplest

Japanese character] and planning with Reverend Sasaki what they could do to have the youth come out nights for rehearsal. I was truly impressed with their example of dedication and caring about the young people. We will never forget how much they did for all of us young Niseis.

Mrs. Sasaki took over whatever she felt was her responsibility to educate the girls in the church. We had many new experiences. One exciting time was the annual King's Daughters Club "Variety Show." We worked hard and sold tickets to raise money for the church.

Mrs. Sasaki took this opportunity to try a famous Japanese Historical Classical Drama. It was a famous story of an indomitable teacher of great renown who educated a promising young Shogun titled, "*Kasuga no Tsubone*." The cast dressed in wigs, kimonos, *chonmage* [hairstyle for samurai men]. Mrs. Sasaki managed to beg, borrow, and create all the costumes and made wigs with many creative mothers' help. She worked incredibly hard to make this innovative production possible in this rural community church and social hall of Florin, California around 1939-40.

The boys also had a chance to experience drama in Bible stories. I remember one Easter Al took the lead in the story of the "Prisoner of Zenda" while I played the dramatic music. He was struggling as he fearfully escaped and was starving, looking for crumbs to pick up to eat. The Isseis cried as they saw him struggling and finally escaping as he limped away.

Besides these activities, the Epworth League had many successful group activities involving the Young Peoples Christian Conference [YPCC is an ecumenical Japanese American organization of Baptists, Presbyterians and

Methodists], and with joint Epworth League meetings with the Methodist youth groups in Walnut Grove, Loomis, or Sacramento.

I still marvel at my dad's foresight. He never lived to see me become Jan Ken Po Gakko Director from 1977 to 1981. He had died by 1964 after seventeen years surviving a massive stroke. It was before I had attained some recognition as a public school teacher. He must have sensed the tremendous opportunity there was in Mrs. Kohana Sasaki and the influence she could have on the Niseis. He spoke to her and she was willing to give me private lessons on Japanese history, classical literature, expanding our cultural arts. I listened intently and wrote pages and pages of notes to fill my note book. I kept them and I am astonished I could have so completely forgotten about them.

I was overwhelmed during my sensitive teen years by the prejudice and discrimination first in graduating from a segregated Florin Grammar School where I attended three years, and the shame and feeling that I was a second class American, humiliated, self conscious and afraid. As I thought I was gradually getting adjusted and feeling a bit more outgoing, I was stunned by being rejected as one of the top nine orators at Elk Grove High School to compete in an Annual Community History Oratorical Contest. I felt a part of me died. I whispered and walked softly and forgot to smile. The teachers wondered, "What's happened to Mary?" "Why is she not bouncing around and smiling?"

But the shame of prejudice and discrimination in my early life had a shocking effect on my person. Quietly and subconsciously, I rejected my

parents' cultural background, even felt ashamed of them, and submerged from my mind Kohana Sasaki's teaching and the magnificent cultural gift she so joyfully shared with me. Without realizing what had really happened to me, I forgot that I ever had such profound beautiful lessons of inspiration and thrilling cultural arts involving creative arts in serving attractive Japanese foods, even witnessing the ways she treated every one with joyous smiling twinkle in her eyes, the way she spoke such lovely Japanese words. She was a splendid role model who walked among us and a perfect example for us to follow. I'm appalled to realize how I could completely forget and reject all of it!

Fortunately, it lay dormant until I directed Jan Ken Po Gakko from 1977 to 1988, five years, when it was all resurrected. I went to visit Mrs. Sasaki in Los Angeles for a few days and revived my notes and memories and brought back new ideas and songs for the challenge of directing Jan Ken Po Gakko children to learn how to develop self esteem and find their roots. It was what I had lost. How could I lead such a program? A victim of such rejection!

In 1965, when Marielle spent a year teaching in Japan to try to get some Japanese cultural education, her letters were full of exciting ventures all about Japan, and during Christmas holiday she enjoyed a trip to Southeast Asia.

In 1966, Al and I decided we must go to meet my sister's family, for Al to seek out relatives in Hiroshima, and to tour Japan and Southeast Asia. At the end of the wonderful thirty day visit in Japan, Rev. Miyake had very thoughtfully planned to provide a rare experience of dining one evening. He

assigned small groups of us to visit notable people who were willing to invite us in for dinner.

It was then we were amazed to meet Professor Imai, a retired former teacher at the famous *Ocha No Mizu Joshi Daigaku*. I couldn't get over the surprise to meet someone who taught at the same school where my beloved mentor Kohana Sasaki attended. Professor Imai remembered her vividly as I related my great admiration and respect for this teacher I had the great fortune to know and by whom I was so profoundly taught. She remembered how brilliant Kohana was in that school. She stood out in her earnest eagerness to learn and listen and grow. She was a great delight to all the teachers at this extraordinary peeress university. I was deeply gratified to have met Imai *Sensei* who gave me several gifts. One was my cherished picture of children playing jan ken po which I used on our first bulletin board when I became director in 1977.

Kohana Sasaki had a lovely singing voice and had Japanese music she encouraged our church choir to try. She inspired our struggling choir with first having me play the bass, tenor, alto and soprano parts on the piano. The choir members had little training, but it grew into quite a big choir and we were so proud. Mrs. Sasaki's daughter Mildred loved to play the piano and soon became a capable choir leader, too.

We were really blessed, I think, to have had contact with Rev. and Mrs. Sasaki for ten years. They were both devoted, wonderful ministers. The Sasaki's came during the harshest depression years, from 1932 to 1942. There were times that we had no money to pay them. But I remember they said,

"We'll endure what you're going through with hardships. We'll be willing to work." They decided that they won't move. They'll stay and they'll be as hungry as all of us were. And Mrs. Sasaki, whenever there was a chance to work out, she would pick strawberries or do something. Rev. Sasaki said, "We'll try to feed the family by growing things." He planted *negi* (green onions) and *daikon* (long, white radishes) and other vegetables in the back yard. He shared these with the members. He got busy with his boots and shovel and worked in the garden. They were willing to work like we worked. And she said if we couldn't pay them, it was okay. Different people brought chicken or vegetables from our farms, and tried to supplement what we couldn't afford to pay them in money. They really lived without much money, and I often think what a wonderful example of Christian sacrifice they showed us.

After the traumatic war experience and the internment, many years after the Sasaki's settled in New Jersey, Rev. Sasaki died. Mrs. Sasaki went to live with her children in Los Angeles. In 1978, Al and I said we've got to honor her when we found out she was eighty years old. We put on an eightieth birthday party. We brought pictures of her that we gave her, and we wrote about the event in the newspapers. One hundred fifty [150] former Methodist Church members came from all over to honor her, and to have the first taste of a reunion. I never realized what the reunion could be, until 1978. No other group was talking about reunions. We started it because we wanted to be sure that on her eightieth birthday, Mrs. Sasaki could be honored and recognized. And so we even bought her a diamond necklace. I

don't know if she ever wore it. But that's the way we felt about her. She talked about *Kongoseki* [diamond] and it was supposed to be a precious stone that was written up in a very famous song the Empress wrote. "*Kongoseki wa miga kazu ba*" and they sang that song for her that night when we presented the necklace to her. But anyway, that was the least of things that interested Mrs. Sasaki. But we were all inspired and happy to show our appreciation at last. We had a lovely social hour visiting with all the former members who had scattered all over the United States in the thirty six years since we abruptly were driven out of Florin. It was great after we presented her with the diamond necklace. We felt she was like a precious diamond to be cherished forever.

After the dinner and speeches, we had our group picture taken and closed with a quiet worship service. We will never forget this memorable appreciation/first reunion that honored a great teacher, Kohana Sasaki in March 1978 when she was eighty years old and we gave her a "*Sha-on-Kai*" an event to express appreciation. And so, if we picked up anything about Japanese culture, it really started with Mrs. Kohana Sasaki. A very special teacher.

MABLE BARRON
MY COMPASSIONATE MENTOR

by Mary Tsukamoto

November 11, 1997

I was overwhelmed during my sensitive teen years by prejudice and discrimination. I graduated from a segregated Florin Grammar School where I attended three years. I was immersed in shame and feeling that I was a second class American, humiliated, self conscious and afraid. Then in high school, I timidly felt drawn to this smiling, caring, friendly person. She had big blue eyes, and she was a blond, plump, peppy, short person. She was bouncing around the school, always positive and showed much attention to all students. She recognized why most of us of Japanese descent crept self consciously around the fringe of the circle of activity in class or in all school events.

I was attracted to this bubbling successful teacher I had for freshman English. I fancied taking another class from her. That class was public speaking, but I never dreamed it meant the excruciating ordeal of standing in front of the class to die a thousand deaths, making impromptu speeches, or pantomime a story. I managed somehow to survive these ordeals. One assignment Mable gave in the spring was to do an oration of California history. She taught us how to prepare it, to be sure there was a lofty goal or a plea, to make it a formal oration. She taught us how to deliver it. I was

excited by her teaching and we all gave our finished orations and forgot all about the assignment.

One day, suddenly over the loud speaker I heard, "Mary Dakuzaku, please come to the office." I was red faced. What had I done? Was I in trouble? In the office, I found our principal Edwin Wells and Mable Barron, looking very serious. Then I was told that because of my parents, I would not qualify as one of the top nine best orators to compete in the Annual Community Wide Oratorical Contest, competing for a great silver cup. I was relieved not to have to speak on the stage. "I said, it's okay. I'm glad I won't have to participate in the oratorical contest on the stage!" But Mable was visibly outraged and argued that our public schools should not be a part of discrimination exemplifying preference by race, modeling poor human relations when our task is to educate and lift the minds to nobler, fairer goals. The school should challenge students to become more just, more decent and more respectable.

But it was out of our hands, said the distraught principal. The Native Sons and Daughter of the Golden West were the sponsors who had asked the students of the school, including the public speaking class, to try out. And they established the rules of the contest. Mable was deeply hurt and embarrassed to be a party to such bigotry. As I walked away, I thought I had been gradually getting adjusted and feeling a bit more outgoing. However, I was stunned by being rejected as one of the top nine orators in this contest. I felt a part of me had died. I whispered and walked softly and forgot to smile. The teachers wondered, "What's happened to Mary?" "Why is she not

bouncing around and smiling?" Mable Barron knew. Knowing how pained I was by the shocking discriminatory rejection, she tried her utmost to provide success for me.

Mable knew I needed to experience a successful oration as she was certain of my talent. Miraculously, out of the blue, that early spring of 1932, the Sacramento Japanese Students' Club of Sacramento Junior College sponsored an Oratorical Contest. Then a rash of other groups started having oratorical contests. I was chosen to represent the Florin Epworth League of the Japanese Methodist Episcopal Church.

Mable was elated. She said, "I'll help you, Mary. You must go and speak!" The title of this first oration was, "Is Higher Education Justified?" And so, I wrote my oration, not really knowing how. Mable sat down and practically rewrote it. And furiously, she coached me every opportunity she could squeeze into her busy days. Not only was she teaching English and public speaking classes, but she also directed the school plays. There were nightly rehearsals.

Mable had taught us how to prepare and deliver a winning oration, She said, "Act as if you are on top of the world. Look at each person in the audience. and speak to each one intently. Say clearly what your message is. Don't waste anyone's time speaking of trivial things, speak only of things worthwhile and ennoble the effort and the message. Smile and retain your composure. Pretend you are in command. Even if you are frightened, don't show it."

Consequently, I won first place at the oratorical contest in Sacramento and proudly brought home an electric clock. I was honored and delighted to taste my very first victory. Mable was so proud for me and very excited that I had won. She was happy and relieved for my sake as she had worked hard to make me a winning orator.

In the 1933 spring, once again she coached me. This time the University of California Japanese Students' Club challenged all youth to speak on "What Can We Leave for the Next Generation?" For a seventeen year old, this question was not easy. I tried to write a winning oration, but, Mable knew what the Isseis dreamed for our future. She made me conjure an ideal Nisei, standing proudly before us with bright golden dreams of his future in a wonderful land of liberty and justice.

First, Mable made this Nisei strong with noble features, respected and admired, and willing to struggle hard to tear down walls of discrimination and strive for America, eager to build a land of equal and just opportunities for all people. Strive to change laws that divide, and work for laws that build understanding and create and develop more good will and brotherhood. The homes we establish for the third generation will be our homes with with strong spiritual and moral values and reflect with pride our Issei parents' dreams of valuing their treasured Japanese heritage as well as our strong clear faith in our own United States. We must become best role models of a fine American, loyal and devoted to our great Constitutional Democratic nation and be an exemplary citizen, caring and responsible citizens to keep Democracy and its precious U. S. Constitution alive and well.

I won in 1933 and brought home the silver loving cup, the Consul General Takasugi's cup (a perpetual cup). Two years later another Florin Epworth League member, Mas Yamasaki, won the contest and the cup was brought back to Florin. Mas wasn't interested, so I have kept the cup.

With her typical faith to duty as "cause to right the wrong", Mable Barron single handedly started the ball rolling for my college education. As a result of her effort, her alma mater, College of the Pacific, sent a student secretary, young Bob Burns to interview me. [In 1960, Bob Burns became a distinguished President of the University of Pacific.] Mable made innumerable trips to the college, determined to get me a scholarship to attend after graduating from Elk Grove High School. She succeeded and I enrolled at COP in September of 1933.

These were depression years, and Mable was finally able to get a meager \$150 scholarship for me from Tully Knoles, President of the College of the Pacific. She knew I needed to get a college education and she took it upon herself to get me there. She got old clothes from friends, cut and sewed to make a wardrobe for me of several suits, dresses and outfits. I was so floored and touched. She got another teacher, Miss Helen Householder [my Home economics teacher] to give me \$10 a month for spending money! And even though Mable was struggling to raise her two children and had an alcoholic husband, she managed to buy me shoes. Other people anonymously and generously supported my \$1200 tuition needed for study at COP each year. Once I got there, I was never caught up, and worked on SERA program for students at 40 cents an hour as janitor before and after school and on

weekends, besides working for my room and board. By my sophomore year, I developed painful rheumatoid arthritis. There was nothing known to doctors in those days. So, in excruciating pain, I had to walk up and down stairs to class. Dr. Colliver's religion class was on the third floor. They had no elevators. The pain of arthritis caused a change in my educational plans, and I was forced to withdraw from COP in 1936.

Then came marriage to Al Tsukamoto, the birth of Marielle and the internment during World War II. I had been volunteering in Marielle's school, and in 1949, with the courageous encouragement of Isabelle Jackson, Principal of Florin School, I was able to continue my education. Many other educators encouraged me, and I became a public school teacher. During my years of teaching, each day I stepped into the classroom, Mable Barron's ideas and confident spirit, bold courage and undefeatable stance, walked with me all the way.

Little did Mable realize that more than fifty five to sixty five years later, I would become a nationally recognized spokesperson. My wonderful American role model, Mable Barron with great spiritual, religious faith and deeply patriotic fervor, had nurtured me to become an activist for justice and a speaker on television and in the press.

Mable Barron became a notable educator from the classroom English teacher at Elk Grove and Lodi, to principal and superintendent of a growing area, the Lincoln School District north of Stockton. There is a Mable Barron Elementary School in the district to honor this dynamic and profound teacher.

I was happy and proud to attend a banquet in her honor for a lifetime of achievements upon her retirement. It was a tremendous event paying tribute to a great compassionate educator and magnanimous human being. What a profound influence she had on my life! I am eternally grateful I was there at Elk Grove High School from 1929 to 1933, and had Mable Barron for my teacher and friend.

MY PROFESSION

by Mary Tsukamoto

November 11, 1997

In 1947, after the shocking, traumatic nightmare of the internment experience, we returned to a Florin that was no longer a bustling strawberry and grape shipping community. Florin had died. The new town looked deserted and many familiar buildings we had remembered were burned or removed. We were trying to pick up the pieces to find a new life for us in Florin. Grape prices were down. Many couldn't return. Some had sold their land and lost their property. Many grape vineyards were abandoned. By 1949, Al had uprooted age old grapevines and burned them! We were looking for a job.

One day, in 1949, when I was attending a PTA meeting, Isabelle Jackson asked me, "Mary has anyone ever asked you to be a teacher?" I was so surprised, I burst out telling her what happened at the College of the Pacific in 1933 when I was registering for classes. The Registrar said, "Mary, you can't major in Education! No one will hire you because your parents are from Japan!" I was deeply hurt, but quietly changed my major to Social Science.

Isabelle Jackson had seen me helping with the Girl Scout Troop meetings, leading fun songs, and directing a puppet show, "Hansel and Gretel." She bravely smiled and said, "Why don't you check your credits at the newly opening Sacramento State College." [It was located on the

Sacramento Junior College campus.] "See what Dr. Walker can advise you on what you need to qualify for a California Teaching Credential."

My window to the world flew wide open! I never dreamed this was possible. I had been looking for a California State job as a filing clerk. I couldn't type, never took business English. I never dared hope I'd be a public school teacher. I had been a church pianist, a choir director and a Sunday School teacher. That's all.

Before another month went by, Mrs. Jackson drove into our yard and excitedly told me the Florin School Board agreed to hire me as a third grade teacher, because the regular teacher wants to retire! She needed me to fill the position. But, I haven't taken one class on how to teach! I wouldn't know what to do! She said, "We'll sign an Emergency Contract for you to teach until you get your credential." She said she has confidence in me! I said, "Yes, if she'll help me." I must take college classes after school and during summers. So, unexpectedly, I became a public school teacher that unforgettable September of 1949.

I was apprehensive and afraid, remembering that in 1929 I graduated from this very same school which was segregated then. In 1939, the Florin JACL helped to integrate the school, but the memories of the segregated school and the humiliation still persisted in my mind. I was determined that I would become a 100 percent Red-White-and Blue American public school teacher. No one shall look at me and accuse me of being "Japanese." My ancestry and experiences of the past were locked away, rejected, forgotten!

Still often shaking in my shoes; still very shy and frightened and self conscious; a victim of a lifetime of hate and racism. Every moment I walked into my classroom, I prayed that no irate parent would come storming into the room complaining, "Why don't you go back where you belong?!" But, no one ever did in the twenty six great years. I taught in Florin, Isabelle Jackson, Samuel Kennedy, and James McKee Schools. But my fear was there, so I tried my very best to hide my identity as an American with a Japanese background. I never introduced anything of Japanese culture or ever mentioned the terrible internment experience. I was ashamed of all of it and thought I had successfully buried it so no one needs to say I didn't belong in an American public school.

In 1965, something forced me to change. I had the great good fortune of having John Marshall in my fifth grade class. Another unforeseen occurrence was the assignment of two new students from Japan in my class. Tadakazu Hatch, age 12, and his sister Reiko knew little English, and the Elk Grove School District decided that since I was bilingual, the two students should be assigned to my fifth grade class at Kennedy. In order to help the two new students adjust quickly, and the class accept them, Charlotte Barnes, the principal suggested I introduce some Japanese culture--writing, songs, arts and crafts. So I started to teach children's songs, some Japanese words of courtesy, writing kanji and origami [paper folding], *kirigami* [cut paper craft]. The children loved it and they all were electrified by the change in my teaching style. It spilled out into the multi-room where we could do team teaching and sharing them with other classrooms. At Christmas, the

Japanese songs became dances and the children loved it. The parents and other students loved all their projects.

John Marshall's interest grew as I never imagined a ten year old boy's would. He spent afternoons and evenings doing his own research and created background materials for Japanese art activities making beautiful creative song charts. He soon became my after school aide. And, in the course of several years as he went on to junior and senior high school, John continued to study at the Buddhist Church Japanese Language School. He mastered 500 Japanese *kanji* [characters]. He confided that some day he would like to go to Japan. So, he worked for me and saved his money. He went to Japan for five years. Today, he is an internationally acclaimed textile artist, and an author creating one of a kind wearing apparel, teaching and demonstrating, and having shows in Japan and Asia.

During the next ten years of teaching, I was involved with the National Association of Childhood Education, on the International Commission, serving in the Intermediate level, and worked on "How Literature Can Help Create World Understanding." I spent time on teaching it to report at the International Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Another year I took the Japanese Doll Collection which Marielle and I had gathered after several trips to Japan, 1968, 1971, and 1978. Our collection was growing. Marielle and I had a Doll presentation, "I am Somebody" in Washington, D.C. I researched the historical background, how the dolls were created, and the meaning for the Doll displays. So, each year after 1971 at McKee School, I had a special Japanese Doll Festival presentation, and by the last few year, 1974, '75 and '76,

it became an International Doll Festival. All children were invited to bring their dolls to exhibit and share the background of their doll as I had shared what I knew about my collection.

But never once did I mention our internment experience or how I felt about prejudice. It was a closed part of my life. I wanted to forget.

Explanation of
ANOTHER VIEW

On Wednesday, October 15, 1997, Mary Tsukamoto spoke to a group of teachers at the California State University, Sacramento Library Archives. The teachers were participating in a writing project and viewing the display of materials from the Japanese American Archival Collection (JAAC). The Collection began with the artifacts, photographs, and documents which had been gathered by Mary over many years. Other materials continue to be added to the Collection.

On Friday, October 17, I went to pick up Mary's edited printed transcripts. She also had prepared the following information which I consider appropriate to add as a supplement to her interview narrative.

Joanne Iritani

ANOTHER VIEW

by Mary Tsukamoto

October 16, 1997

Last night at CSUS, I spoke about how racism and prejudice affects people who are victims and yes, even the perpetrators of hate from youth to adulthood! I suddenly remembered and was shocked. I never realized how much it had hurt me.

I was pretending to be just a red, white and blue American teacher! Shocking! I was not an honest, true person!

For twenty six happy years of being a public school teacher in America, I never once mentioned the Internment Experience. When people tried to bring the subject up, [caring teachers], I remember I just passed it on as just an experience and I never went into detail. No resentment of violations of Constitutional rights! Not one word did I speak about internment in my classroom as I taught fifth grade U.S. History and U.S. Government!

I hid my cultural roots. I was ashamed of being Japanese. My love of Japanese things were awakened in 1966 on a trip to Japan. But I didn't do very much about it in school until 1971 to 1976. My last five years. I showed Marielle and my doll collection and shared their stories one year only.

In 1965, when I had two youngsters in my classroom from Japan who spoke no English, the Principal Charlotte Barnes encouraged me to use some Japanese cultural arts, but I was sensitive and did not do very much at first. John Marshall loved it and was inspired to become a great international fabric

artist, as it developed later. It was in 1965 he was in my class. I taught some Japanese songs and words and some writing. The class liked it!

But only in 1977, when the Jan Ken Po Gakko parents requested I speak and teach about what happened to their great grandparents did we begin to know what we must teach. I also had to scan my past, to dig into all my notes from Kohana Sasaki's lessons, to appreciate and own up to my own roots. Pride and joy blossomed in the five years I was Director and assembly speaker to the Yonsei's in Jan Ken Po Gakko. I was at last an integrated balanced person, a proud American of Japanese Ancestry!

Striving for Redress; testifying before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC); knowing the children wanted to know the truth, "Was great grandpa really a spy or traitor? Is that why you were all locked up for three and one half years?" The truth could be found in the 1983 Commission report and the ten years' effort to win Redress. Only then did I learn how to speak and fight to tell the truth and finally, finally become my true self. A loyal American with Japanese ancestry and happily blended roots knowing full well I am a loyal, unswerving, responsible citizen of the United States, but a proud person of Japanese ancestry.

At last I have become a happy person of self esteem and self respect!
Worthy of becoming a true teacher!

LISTING OF PHOTOS
SHOWN ON THE SESSION THREE VIDEO

The following list of photos were shown during Session three. The microphone had not been turned on, so there is no sound on the video tape.

1. Kohana Sasaki, taken at her 80th Birthday Reunion Tribute
March 1978
2. Actresses of the King's Daughters Club, of the Japanese Methodist Church during the summer variety show, a presentation of a special Japanese classical play taken from Kabuki *Kasugi No Tsubone.*, Pre-World War II.
3. Three girls in samurai costumes with their wigs.
4. Mary's father's passport issued for a planned trip in 1941. He decided not to go to Japan to see his mother and daughter due to the changing state of U.S. - Japan relations at that time. He lost his first passport during the 1906 San Francisco earthquake soon after his arrival to the United States.
5. Mary wearing overalls and bonnet working in the strawberry field.
- 6 - 7. The family in Jerome, Arkansas
- 8 - 9. Copy of Christmas letter to Eleanor and President Franklin Roosevelt. The drawing was by Mary's sister Julia showing Marielle praying and a barrack in the background.
Eleanor Roosevelt answered Mary using a gold printed White House envelope. Many people followed the mailman to 9-8-E room in block 9 when this letter was delivered. Mom said, "That's why I like America!" It was a cold frosty January in Jerome, Arkansas. My heart felt warm to hold the letter written by Eleanor Roosevelt from the White House in Washington, D.C.
10. Jerome had a USO-YWCA. I was director 1943.
Photo of visiting Nisei soldiers who had brought their cameras.
he boys training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi rode 15 hours on the bus to visit Jerome.

11. Poster used at the Jerome USO-YWCA, "Girls Let's do Our Part"
One hundred girls went to Camp Shelby by bus. Mary was among the chaperones that accompanied them.
 12. The Tsukamoto family in Jerome, block 9, March 1944. The family gathered for the funeral of Grandpa Ouchida, Al's sister Edith's father-in-law. Al, Mary and Marielle flew in from Kalamazoo, Michigan. The photo shows Al's father Kuzo, 77, and mother Ito, 65, and sister Margaret Ogata's family. One Ouchida son, Pedro, who was in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team rushed back to his camp after the service.
 13. Mary's parent's during a visit to Washington, D.C. before their return to the Sacramento area.
 14. Mary and Marielle
 15. Family leaving Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1945.
 16. Al and Mary's photo was taken by a street postcard photographer soon after their return to Florin.
 17. Their house.
 18. The 50th wedding anniversary of Kuzo and Ito Tsukamoto.
 19. Graduation of a class Mary taught.
- In 1957, Florin School PTA sponsored a "This is Your Life, Mary Tsukamoto" program. Mary received a California PTA Life Membership pin.
20. "This is Your Life" book
 21. Mary at the event
 22. with Mable Barron
 23. Mary and Al
 24. Mary and Marielle
 25. with Isabelle Jackson
 26. Marielle
 27. Three women sitting on the couch - Mrs. Kiino [Mary's sister Ruth's mother-in-law], Mary's mother, and Mary's sister Masako visiting from Japan.

SEVEN TIMES DOWN, EIGHT TIMES UP

by

Roy Herburger

The Elk Grove Citizen
Wednesday, October 30, 1985

There is a Japanese doll, with no arms or legs that is a little like Humpty , but in the case of Humpty, this Japanese doll doesn't break. It serves as a lesson in determination, drive and willpower.

The Japanese doll [*Daruma*] has just a head and a body, you hit it and down it goes, but being round it bounces back. There is a saying, "seven times down, but eight times up." With this doll you also paint in the iris of the eyes as you accomplish your goals.

Saturday night the Japanese American Citizens League, Florin Chapter, presented a large doll without arms or legs to Doris Matsui, wife of Congressman Robert Matsui, The Congressman was still in Washington in an extraordinary weekend session, to work on tax reform.

Mrs. Matsui spoke eloquently for the Congressman and received from Mary Tsukamoto, the large doll. Mrs. Matsui was given the privilege to paint in the first iris of the eye of the doll, as Mrs. Tsukamoto said, "the Congressman indeed had accomplished at least half of his goals."

The JACL, Florin Chapter, held their fiftieth anniversary celebration at the dinner and they honored Mary Tsukamoto for her dedication for the fifty years of the existence of the chapter. Her husband, Al, served as the chapter's second president in 1937 and again in 1947-48.

Mary was honored, as both the city of Sacramento and county of Sacramento proclaimed October 26 as "Mary Tsukamoto Day." This educator, historian and sincere humanitarian, has touched all parts of the community: from the students she taught, her church, her own Japanese American people as well as others. She has done this with an arthritis problem that would have crippled most of us into doing nothing, nothing at all.

But in spite of this handicap, she continues her work, tirelessly making her presence felt. She is truly one who has shown that the Japanese doll with no arms and legs is a reality. She has perhaps stumbled or was confronted with at least seven major difficulties in her life, including being shipped from the Florin area to a World War II internment camp for Japanese, but she has bounced back eight times. For her, the iris in both eyes should be painted in as she indeed has done so very, very much for all of us in this area. She and her husband have made our south areas --the city and county of Sacramento, a better place.

Seven times down, eight times up. . .may we all remember that.

[Mr. Herburger verbally granted permission to use this article in this Oral History book of Mary Tsukamoto. Dec. 5, 1997]

SECTION

** Friday, December 26, 1997

The Sacramento Bee

B

BEE ON THE INTERNET

► EDITORIALS
► OBITUARIES

METRO

Teacher's life shows transforming

By Judy Tachibana
Bee Staff Writer

Near the Sacramento community where she once attended a segregated school, Mary Tsukamoto today has an elementary school named in her honor.

In a state where her immigrant parents once could not own land, she became the second person honored as a "Notable Californian" by the state Senate and Capitol

Museum earlier this year. She was selected as an author and activist for equal rights for all Americans.

In a country that imprisoned her and her family because of their race, her story is now told as part of a video, "A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the United States Constitution" at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Tsukamoto has faced difficult situa-

tions during her 82 years: Hit by a trolley in San Francisco as a toddler, segregated by race at a public elementary school in Florin, saddled with painful rheumatoid arthritis since her teens, and imprisoned by the U.S. government early in her marriage.

Through it all, she remained optimistic. And it is education that always gives her hope: Her belief in education and the impact it can have remain the common

power of education

thread of all her many activities.

"That's the hope of keeping democracy alive," Tsukamoto said recently. "It's the people - we have to reach them. When they know the truth, they will get on and help us. Democracy does work; it can be made to work."

To help make it work, Tsukamoto continued to teach even after retiring from 26 years of teaching in the Elk Grove district. She then directed Jan Ken Po Gak-

ko, a Japanese cultural heritage program. She organized lectures and displays - and wrote a book - on the internment of Japanese Americans and initiated a special library collection at California State University, Sacramento.

"She's a treasure for the district, both in terms of who she is and what she's done in the past, and in what she contin-

Please see TSUKAMOTO, page B4.

Tsukamoto: Teachers helped her go to college

Continued from page B1

ues to do," said Dave Gordon, superintendent of the Elk Grove Unified School District.

"Most of all, she's really an inspiration, not only to the students but our staff in terms of what a person ought to do in life," Gordon said. "A teacher is a role model in so many ways. I admire her tremendously."

For example, every year in the spring, Tsukamoto and the Japanese American Citizens League hold a program for 1,000 students on the World War II internment, setting up a replica of a camp in the district board room.

She was born Mary Tsuruko Dakuzaku in San Francisco, the second of five children of Okinawan immigrants. When she was 10, the family moved to the Sacramento area. Even the children helped in the strawberry fields in Florin, which by 1941 was the largest shipper of fresh strawberries in the country.

Teachers influenced Tsukamoto's early life. Mable Barron stood up for her after she was disqualified from higher competition when rules of the Native Sons of the Golden West prohibited children of immigrants from participating in an oratorical contest at Elk Grove High School. Barron coached her for outside contests and helped make it financially possible for her to attend College of the Pacific in Stockton in 1933. Teacher Helen Householder contributed \$10 a month to help with Tsukamoto's expenses.

She married her Florin sweetheart, Alfred Tsukamoto, and the couple had one child, Marielle. When Marielle, who is currently a vice principal at an Elk Grove elementary school, was 5 years old in 1942, the family was sent to the Fresno Assembly Center. From there, they were imprisoned for the remainder of World War II at Jerome, Ark. After a short stint in Kalamazoo, Mich., the Tsukamotos returned to Florin.

They worked their grape vineyard for several years, but because grape prices were low, Al Tsukamoto went to work at the Army Depot. He retired as an electronic technician 30 years later.

Principal Isabelle Jackson en-



Bee photograph/Anne Chadwick Williams

Mary Tsukamoto, a longtime teacher in Elk Grove, was interned during World War II when she was a young mother and has written a book about the Japanese American experience during the war.

couraged Tsukamoto to go into teaching after the war.

During her first year, children were "climbing out the windows," Tsukamoto recalled with a laugh. She quickly became such a respected teacher that in 1992 a new elementary school was named in her honor at 8737 Brittany Park Drive, in the Vintage Park area of south Sacramento.

She takes all things that life tosses her way and turns them, positive or negative, into lessons, said Christine Umeda, a member of the Florin Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League who has worked with Tsukamoto on the internment exhibit for at least 16 years.

"She epitomizes the ultimate in an educator. Everything becomes an educational process," Umeda said. "She uses every vehicle for that. She turns a negative situation to educate others."

Tsukamoto challenged herself and the community when she pushed to start the Japanese American Archival Collection at California State University, Sacramento. Oral histories were compiled and donated to the university by the Florin JACL. The collection now holds dozens of oral interviews, a historic temple altar from the Florin Buddhist Church, photographs, documents, paintings and other artifacts that portray the history of the Japanese

American community in the Florin area.

"I don't think the collection would have happened without her," said Georgiana White, a university archivist.

"By Mary giving us the collection, it seems to have given people permission to open their closets and garage and give (artifacts) to the university," White said.

Mary and Al Tsukamoto live with their daughter Marielle in a new development in Elk Grove, not far from the Florin fields they once farmed. The walls of Tsukamoto's home are filled with plaques and commendations; the overflow is housed at the Tsukamoto Elementary School.

Even at 82, Tsukamoto never complains about physical ailments, Umeda said. Despite hearing loss and the painful arthritis that has plagued her since her teens, Tsukamoto remains active. Her dining room table is cluttered with papers and photographs in preparation for her oral interview which will be part of the CSUS and Florin JACL collection.

Much of Tsukamoto's history is contained in "We the People: A Story of Internment in America," written with Elizabeth Pinkerton, an Elk Grove district administrator. But her transcribed interview will be an addition to the collection of more than 60 Florin residents. Husband Al's was completed in 1992.

SECTION

*** Thursday, January 8, 1998

BBEE ON THE INTERNET ► **www**► **EDITORIALS**
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The Sacramento Bee

METRO

Mary Tsukamoto leaves legacy of education, justice

By Emily Bazar
Bee Staff Writer

Mary Tsukamoto was a teacher and crusader; a teacher whose legacy includes an Elk Grove elementary school named in her honor and a crusader whose firm belief in justice for those Americans forced into internment camps during World War II took her through the halls of Congress, and into the minds of children.

All who speak of the woman, frail from years of battling severe rheumatoid arthritis that at times forced her into a wheelchair, recall a giant who inspired thousands.

"She was a quiet, but a powerful leader in our community. She was a teacher and a leader," said David Gordon, superintendent of the Elk Grove Unified School District. "She touched lives and inspired people to do the right thing and be successful. It was a life very well lived."

Tsukamoto died Tuesday at Kaiser South of complications from double pneumonia. She was 82.

The crusader who attended a segregated elementary school in Florin pursued truth and justice with



Bee file photograph/Anne Chadwick Williams

Mary Tsukamoto "touched lives and inspired people to do the right thing," one admirer said.

zeal, and spent much of her time educating others about the internment camps she and more than 100,000 others were forced into during World War II.

She testified before a congressional committee on internment, helped develop an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution on the issue, wrote a book on internment camps and spearheaded the creation of the Japanese American Archival Collection at California State University, Sacramento.

Every year, along with the Japanese American

Please see TSUKAMOTO, page B4

Tsukamoto: Taught for 26 years

Continued from page B1

Citizens League, she would hold a program for students in the district's board room, which had been fashioned into a replica of a camp.

"Mary always said that the key to making our country even better than it already is is educating and learning from our mistakes," said Twila Tomita Noguchi, a friend and member of the JACL.

Tsukamoto also became a national leader in the effort to provide restitution to Japanese Americans who were given no choice but to relocate to the camps during the war.

"She had a determination to set history in its proper perspective," said former Sacramento Mayor Anne Rudin. "She wasn't afraid to bring up the issue and make us all aware of how people's rights were violated and how, if it happened to one group of people, it could happen to anybody."

Born Mary Tsuruko Dakuzaku in San Francisco, the child of Okinawan immigrants, she was hit by a trolley as a toddler. At the age of 10, the family moved to the Sacramento area and harvested strawberries on its Florin farm under the unyielding Sacramento sun.

After the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, Tsukamoto, her

husband, Alfred, and daughter Marielle were sent to the Fresno Assembly Center in 1942 and then to Jerome, Ark., where they were imprisoned for the remainder of the war.

After a brief stay in Michigan, the family returned to Florin.

Tsukamoto spent several years toiling in grape vineyards before beginning her 26-year teaching career in the Elk Grove Unified School District, which took her through Florin, Jackson, Kennedy and McKee elementary schools before her retirement in 1976.

"She had a presence about her. When she looked at a child, there was no pretension, there was no 'I'm going to teach you what you don't know' attitude," said her daughter, Marielle Tsukamoto, who is vice principal of Ellen Feickert Elementary School in Elk Grove.

"She spoke with truth and sincerity and honest belief, and that came through."

Five years ago, an elementary school at 8737 Brittany Park Drive was named for Mary Tsukamoto.

In retirement, she directed Jan Ken Po Gakko, a Japanese cultural heritage program.

In May, Tsukamoto became the second person honored as a "Nota-

ble Californian" by the state Senate and Capitol Museum.

In September, she was honored with the California Asian Pacific Sesquicentennial Award for extraordinary accomplishments in the California and national Asian Pacific American communities.

In addition to her daughter, Tsukamoto is survived by her husband of 62 years, Alfred; sisters Isabel Oshiro of Concord and Jean Kaku of Tracy; and brother George Dakuzaku of Florin.

A memorial service has been scheduled for 3 p.m. Jan. 17 at the Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church, 6929 Franklin Blvd.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that contributions be made to any of the following:

- Mary Tsukamoto Japanese Archival Collection, California State University, Sacramento, 2000 University Drive, Sacramento, 95819.

- Mary Tsukamoto Memorial Trust Fund, Elk Grove Unified School District, 9510 Elk Grove-Florin Road, Elk Grove, 95624.

- Florin United Methodist Church, 7560 Florin Road, Sacramento, 95828.

B4 Monday, January 12, 1998

The Sacramento Bee

The Sacramento Bee

OPINION

Mary Tsukamoto

A quiet hero who preserved local history

Local historians will forever owe a debt to retired Elk Grove teacher Mary Tsukamoto, who many years ago quietly set about preserving the history of Japanese Americans in Sacramento. The occasion of her death last week of pneumonia is a fitting time to pay respects.

Enlisting the aid of the Japanese American Citizens League, she helped compile the oral histories of Japanese immigrants who settled in the Florin area before World War II. Today, those histories – including taped interviews, artifacts, old photographs and the infamous evacuation orders documenting the seminal event for that community, the wartime internment – are now part of the Japanese American Archival Collection at California State University, Sacramento.

Of course, Tsukamoto didn't just preserve the history, she lived it. The daughter of immigrants from Okinawa, she was born in San Francisco in 1915 but moved to the bustling strawberry farming area at Florin in south Sacramento when she was 10 years old. Married and a new mother when Pearl Harbor

was bombed, she, her husband, Alfred Tsukamoto, and their daughter, along with thousands of other Japanese Americans, were forcibly evacuated in 1942 and spent the war years in internment camps. She returned to Elk Grove after the war, raised her family and became a teacher.

She also developed a passion for telling the story of her people, a story she told often and – despite the injustice of internment – without bitterness. "It's the people – we have to reach them," she told The Bee recently. "When they know the truth, they will get on and help us. Democracy can work. It can be made to work." In recognition of Tsukamoto's contributions, an elementary school has been named after her, and just last year the state Senate and Capitol Museum named her a Notable Californian, only the second person so honored.

Like the Japanese immigrants whose legacy she so lovingly preserved, Mary Tsukamoto enriched our community. Thanks in part to her efforts, both she and they will be remembered.



California
Nevada

THE UNITED METHODIST

Review

edition

UME 14 NUMBER 13

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June 13, 1997

Senate honors Mary Tsukamoto

A tireless educator for equal rights, Mary Tsukamoto, member of Sacramento's Florin UMC, became the second person honored as a "Notable Californian" by the California Senate and State Capitol Museum.

Senators Patrick Johnston, D-Stockton, and Bill Lockyer, D-Hayward, presented Tsukamoto with a Senate resolution in her honor in the Senate chambers at the State Capitol.

Dave Gordon, Elk Grove Unified School District Superintendent, joined more than 30 students from Mary Tsukamoto Elementary School at the ceremony.

They recognized Tsukamoto, who is 82, for her work as an author and activist for equal rights for all U.S. citizens. They also honored her as an example of Japanese Americans' contributions to California's history.

"She has been incredibly instrumental in bringing recognition for so many Japanese issues, and she has been fighting the cause for racial equality," Mette said. "Normally we wouldn't select someone who is still alive, but because of Mary's involvement and her contribution to so many areas, we decided to do it."

Her passion for equal rights and the need to protect the U.S. Constitution were born out of tragic times. Along with 2,500 other Japanese Americans from Florin, Elk Grove and surrounding areas, she and her family were imprisoned in internment camps during World War II. The federal government considered all Japanese Americans a threat to national security after Pearl Harbor was bombed.

Tsukamoto returned to a shattered Florin community after the war, but followed her dream to become a teacher. She began teaching in 1949. That started an association with the Elk Grove Unified School District which has spanned nearly half a century. She still talks to children every spring about the Internment and the need for constant vigilance to protect the freedoms in the Constitution.

Her work has taken her across the nation. For ten years she advocated the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, and later testified before the U.S. Congress, leading to their recognizing that the Internment violated Constitutional rights of more than 100,000 U.S. citizens.

from *The United Methodist Review*, California/Nevada Conference, Delta District section, June 13, 1997.

Permission to print received from Betsy Schwarzentraub, Editor of the Delta District page January 25, 1998.

October 1997 Resume
MARY TSURUKO TSUKAMOTO

EDUCATOR, AUTHOR, SPEAKER,
ACTIVIST FOR JUSTICE AND WORLD PEACE.

VITAE: # Born in 1915, in San Francisco California of
immigrants parents from Okinawa, Japan. Taro Chosei
Dakuzaku and Kame (Yoshinaga) Dakuzaku.

#Schooling: San Francisco, Reformed Church Nursery School,
Turlock & Fresno Elementary Schools, Graduated from Florin
Grammar School in 1929.

Graduated Elk Grove High School in 1933.

Attended College of the Pacific, 1933-1936.

Graduated Sacramento State College in 1951. 76 additional
education courses taken.

*Family: Husband, Alfred Iwao Tsukamoto born in Florin.

As the only son, cared for his aging parents. Kuzo (dad)
lived to be 97 and Ito (mom) lived to be 91. His invalid
sister, Nami Tsukamoto, lived with us until her recovery.

She is well and happily married to John King.

Daughter, Marielle, born in Sacramento in 1937, became an
educator and is currently serving as vice principal of Ellen
Feickert Elementary in the Elk Grove Unified School
District. She built a lovely home and asked us to live with
her. We are grateful she helps us in our declining years.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

#26 years (1950-1976) as an elementary school

teacher: Florin School District, Elk Grove Unified School
District. Retired in 1976.

5 years (1977-1981) as Director of Jan Ken Po

Gakko, a cultural heritage program for fourth generation
children of Americans of Japanese ancestry. Parents felt
the need to provide self esteem and pride to their
children. It is a private parent cooperative program still
in existence.

Speaker, presenter of Japanese Dolls and Cultural

history: Began in 1969 at the Centennial Gold Hill
celebration and continued until 1995.

Collector and presenter of Japanese America

Interment experience. Prepared and presented exhibits
for 20 years (1997-present 1997).

Activist: Lobbying, organizing grassroot support
for redress.

Justice. 1948, Evacuee Claims, 1952, Naturalization,
Redress 1981 Testimony (CWIRC).

*1986, Testifies in Washington Commission D.C at the House Subcommittee Hearing on HR 442 (redress)

*1981- One of 750 who testified before the **Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians**, spoke only six minutes. Amazing requests for interviews followed for several years!

*1983-1988 participate in a vigorous Grassroots campaign to assist hundreds all over America to impact Redress Legislation (HR. 422 and S 422, Civil Liberties Act.)

*August 10,1988, triumphed and was passed by Congress.

*1990 Redress passage and subsequent funding from Entitlement to cover the cost of \$1.2 Billion payment to the Evacuees during WWII for the horrible Injustice of Executive Order 9066 112,000 innocent Japanese Americans. By April 1997 ORA reported n early 80,028 had been paid \$20,000 each et to finish locating 3,000 whose names are still on the record.

***Florin JACL'S Voter Registration.**

***Peace Action** fighting to ban all Nuclear arms, use of Government funds to build weapons of destruction. 1970- 1997 World Peace Project, 1,000 cranes Sadako Sasaki's HIROSHIMA PEACE MONUMENT Prayer for World Peace.

#Author with Elizabeth Pinkerton, "WE the People: The Story of Internment in America" 1987 First Printing, 1988 Second printing. Laguna Publishers.

#Spokes Person on the Internment Issues, Redress, in the press and TV. Media: Washington Post, Circa. 1983 Dallas Herald, 1984, Sacramento Bee since 1982 Sacramento Union Circa 1983, Elk Grove Citizen 1972 -1995. Pacific Citizen Holiday Issue Circa. 1982 Pacific Citizen Holiday Issue Circa. 1982, USA TODAY, April 1986 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

1987, Television: TODAY SHOW, November 1987. Interviewed at the Smithsonian especially for the televised famed "Today Show in New York. Was interviewed by Steve La Rosa's "Gaman" became a nationally recognized video, educating the feelings and experiences of the Japanese Americans. Bob Kashiwagi, Henry Takeda, Kiyo Viacruvias and Mary Tsukamoto were interviewed and appear in this fine video.

#Interviewed chapters in published books:

(A) "**MAKING DO. How Women survived the 30s**" by... Jean Westin.

(B) "**AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.. An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps**"...John Tateishi, Random House.

OUR BITTER INTERNMENT LESSON IN 50 YEARS HAS BECOME OUR DAUNTLESS LEGACY. (Since 1983 to 1997)

Our vision was to reach and educate ourselves, our fellow Nisei, Sansei and Yonseis about the "**Bitter Internment Legacy**" as well as all the people in the wider community and all over the land.

#At Florin JACL's Time of Remembrance Culmination Event, With our tragic history and the triumph of our US Constitutional Democratic America on the entire wall of the YBA hall, our guests are our respected honored elected officials, our respected educators, EGUSD School Board members, our elected county, city and state and national legislators, historic, heroic, nisei and sansei leaders have come to be our inspiring keynote speakers. Not only as our speakers but they were our friends and partners in our quest for equal justice. They have all been inspired by our passion to work harder to bring understanding enthusiasm and work as effective friendly, activists.

***Partnership: Our Elk Grove Unified School District Board of Education** has staunchly supported our Annual Florin JACL Exhibit and the unique opportunity to teach the students (Fifth Graders who are bussed in for nine days. (1166 students in 1997). In 15 years we have reached more than 20,000 students, junior high and senior high at special invitations to speak in assemblies, to Social Studies classes, and English classes.

More than any other School District in the state or nation, Elk Grove teachers and staff and EGUSD Board have persevered with us in our vision and our goals. And they in turn became our staunch supporters as we staged a ten-year battle with the U.S. Government to win **redress** and vindication for the "Worst Mistake the U.S. Government Made During WWII" against innocent American Citizens", stated the eminent Yale Law Professor Eugene Rostow.(in 1943)

***Exhibit Collection: 1977- 1997**

For more than 20 years after I was jolted out of my frightened humiliated silence about our most traumatic, tragic experience of our lives(The uprooted 112,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast for three years)

The Jan Ken Po Gakko parents, the Sanseis who were puzzled and upset and felt a great sense of loss of self respect, courage and pride, sought to sponsor a program to educate their fourth generation children, the, Yonseis about their own Great grandparents and why we were treated so shamefully during the war.

As a retired school teacher, I knew they needed much visual material to understand and learn what I must teach about Internment experience. I purchased a few Army photos taken during the devastating years, in the National archives. But nothing I had ever cleared in my mind or the children this sad episode in our lives. The answer had to come from the Government that was responsible for the order, the WRA , the Internment Camps. Up till 1977-78, there was none. I slowly began to see my mission was to protest and seek the answer

We ask in desperation, How in the world can a great Democratic Nation , leading the world to restore the Four Freedoms,: Freedom from Fear, Want, Poverty, Religious Liberty , inspite of war-time emergencies, violate the Constitution and forget the Bill of Rights, and send all persons of Japanese ancestry only living along the West Coast, claiming we were a threat to the security of the West Coast with trial or due process. We were in a mass uprooting unprecedented?"

In 20 years with news articles in the P. C. and photos and pictures that came out slowly we created material that could help to show we were innocent. Not until after the Commission hearing and the publication of "PERSONAL JUSTICE DENIED", 1983 reported by the Commission (nine members of great Americans) We learned it happened because of **Race Prejudice, War Hysteria and Failure of Political Leadership.** So gradually, meaningful material did make its appearance in our collection. The final apology in 1988, President Reagans' signing of the **Civil Liberties Act of 1988** and the final fund appropriated from the Congressional Entitlement fund did the fast disappearing Isseis begin to see the twenty thousand dollars and the letter of apology from the president .

***1994 CSUS Archive Library:** Stored in our Tsukamoto closet for more than 20 years the material has finally found a permanent home. The Sacramento State University Archival Library, and Georgiana White, Archivist accepted the responsibility to store it, preserve it, exhibit it, to teach it to the students any groups interested at the California State University at Sacramento and make it available through internet to the widest reach beyond our shores!!

ON NOVEMBER 16TH 1994, a Special PRIVATE Reception was held for the INITIAL COLLECTION OF FLORIN JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL MATERIAL TURNED OVER BY MARY TSUKAMOTO and the Florin JACL TO THE Archival Library. It also includes the impressive collection of more than 50 Oral history published in beautifully bound set, the great work of Marian Kanemoto and her tireless crew of typists, transcribers and patient organizers. The inspiration and invitation has reached many others in the entire Valley Including people beyond Florin, to Sacramento, and other Japanese American Communities. The Historical Collections has grown and from many sources, therefore it shall be called the **JAPANESE AMERICAN ARCHIVAL COLLECTION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT SACRAMENTO (JAAC/CSUS)**

Tsukamoto and Dakuzaku Family, (Brief Story.)

Kuzo and Ito Tsukamoto were converted Christians in the early 1913-1915 . The Tsukamotos worked to build the first Japanese Methodist Mission in Florin in 1915 and became staunch Methodists through his love and admiration for Rev. Y. Manabe

(35 years later Rev. Manabe had become a respected President of the Aoyama Gakuen Board in Tokyo), who came as a young very first FLORIN CHURCH pastor. Another bright Christian youth, Yasaburo Tsuda, taught Japanese Language and Sunday School. Kuzo offered his home to both young men. Thus Kuzo and Ito's life in America started out with a firm Christian Religious Foundation.

Taro and Kame Dakuzaku came to Florin in 1925 to become a berry farmer. (Ever since the almost tragic accident (1917) when second daughter Tsuru was run over by a trolley car on Geary Street in San Francisco, but miraculously escaped any injury by being caught in the "cow catcher" net under the front of the street car!" The story spread throughout San Francisco Japanese immigrant Community.

The Missionaries at the Reformed Church Nursery School offered to look after the little children instead of allowing them out on the busy Streets. They came to take us everyday to Nursery school. With diapers in our lunch pail, Haru(4) and Tsuru 2 for the first time in their lives, went to a Protestant Church Nursery School. Our parents and Auntie Nobu and Uncle Choshin were impressed as the children came home singing songs of "Jesus' Loves Me"and praying! Ever since then wherever we moved, the families looked for a Christian Church. It made a difference for all of us, as future church members. Deep religious roots began in San Francisco in 1917.)

We, children became active members of the Methodist Mission when we moved to Florin, and joined the Florin Provisional Methodist Mission and our life became more wonderful with a fine youth program and Young people's Christian Conferences and Clubs.

Our parents were always working in the berry patch, but felt Church life was second to public school. They allowed us to attend all the activities. There came a time in the middle of a deep depression when we were all very poor and life in Florin was a great struggle.

Dad had often taken to drinking through the years, to forget his great woes as he tried his utmost to raise us, (there were six of us) Mom had a tough life, (I remember) But wonderful changes happened. Dad and mom were converted and became Christians too. (circa 1933) What a difference. He stopped smoking and drinking and became a gentle fine dad, the rest of his 77 years of life.

#Al and Mary were married by Rev. Y. Sasaki, at the Florin Japanese Methodist Church. In 1936. Mrs. Kohana Sasaki, refined highly cultured educator became my dear mentor and life-long friend. We, Tsukamotos have always been an active church family. Growing up with the Church Choir, as its first pianist, and leader, Mary was soon teaching Sunday School, choir leader, playing the piano for the Issei services.

#Executive Order 9066

We continued supporting our Florin Japanese Methodist Church until the doors were boarded -up and the military put us on busses and trains to be dispersed to distant places, that fateful morning, May 19, 1942.

Our experiences on our "journey" were packed full, Fresno, Jerome, Indiana Mission project, Kalamazoo and we were finally home nurtured and spiritually growing through the enormous adversities of our years we were in exile.

Al Tsukamoto's decide to join the Florin United Methodist Church. 1947 All his life Al had been a member of the Florin Japanese Mission Church. After coming home worried and afraid, from our Exile for three and a half years, we were gratefully welcomed by Loren Mee, my former classmate at College of the Pacific across the street from our Methodist Mission where we had grown up.

In 1947, not enough Japanese evacuees had returned to reorganize. The doors were still closed. We became established in the Caucasian church and joined in 1947 when Rev. Bill Troutner was pastor. Our Al Tsukamoto family has become staunch, active, involved members of the Florin United Methodist Church for fifty years!

Our Parents, the Kuzo Tsukamoto and Taro Dakuzaku resumed their active participation in their own Japanese Methodist Mission when many more returned and eventually started a Church program, across Florin Road from us. They wished for us to return to help lead the Japanese Methodists to help the groups to reorganize but we were already deeply involved in Sunday school, Choir, Church Board and made many friends.

***1949: Isabelle C. Jackson asks an important question. I became a surprised public school teacher!** A very courageous educator dared to ask me "Has anyone ever asked you to be a teacher?" "NO ONE"! I only remember that when I was enrolling at the College of the Pacific in 1933, the registrar said, "Mary, you can't major in education, No one will hire someone like you because of your race." With a red face, I meekly changed my major to Religious Education and Social Science. I was utterly demeaned! In sixteen years had the country changed? It was 1949! Seeing Isabelle's wonderful smiling face, I felt encouraged.

She told me to get my College units checked to find out how I might work for my teaching credential at the new Sacramento State College.

Suddenly my world was transformed into a magnificent symphony! Mrs. Isabelle Jackson drove into our farm and announced that her third grade teacher wanted to retire and there was no one to fill that position. **She needed a teacher and came to ask me to teach!**

A fulfilling life as an educator began in 1949 till I retired in 1976.

#A New Methodist Church is Built on Palmer House Drive! Only a few faithful members with, tears, prayer, sweat ! It was a Miracle! From 1959 till 1963, because of a great preacher in a wheel chair who came not only to inspire us but to have a strong church! His dream was to build a new Florin United Methodist Church on a new site! Al and I were completely involved !. We

moved, we completed the new church and it grew and grew as other ministers came to serve.

***1989 We celebrated 100 years of Methodism in Florin!**

Great Ministers worked courageously and their dynamic spiritual labor for fifty years: These wonderful Saints named I shall name who were Florin's Ministers during my life time: Mees, Troutner, Neitmann, Petty, Findley, Brunswicks Glenn and John, Reneau, Wells, Cordess, Ubalde. Now for the past rich ten fruitful years, we've had Reverend Faith Whitmore as our spiritual nurturing pastor. We are happy Marielle Al and I have been loved in a fine Church Family for nearly 50 years at Florin United Methodist Church.

Recognition

#1957 Florin PTA's Life Membership Pin presented with "A This Is Your Life" Program complete with thrilling surprise presence of loved ones I never dreamed could get together on a PTA night in Florin. **Mabel Barron**, my dear mentor, a very busy Superintendent of the Lincoln School District near Stockton, came all the way out on Tuesday evening! My brother George came to our PTA meeting for the first time in his life. Al was present also! Rev. John Brunswick, and Marielle from UOP. What an overwhelming surprise. I sat on the stage and was deeply moved. Bob McClung (our Seventh Grade Teacher at Florin) did a masterful job of writing the program, culminating the evening with a **surprise PTA Life Membership pin!** This was a **memorable first thrilling evening of my life** as a teacher. (Little did I know then what would happen to me in 40 more years as an educator!!)

Honored:

1958 -Delta kappa Gamma Society's Eminent Women Educator's nominee **Women of Distinction Publication.**

1975 -Sacramento "County Teacher of the Year"

#1976 -A Mary Tsukamoto Redwood Tree Dedicated in the Avenue of the Giants, Myer's Flat. CA. by Northern Section ACEI

1977 -Women's Division of the United Methodist Women **Global Concerns,** (a sapphire pin)

1978- **CTA Educators' Gold Award,** by. Capital Services, Northern Calif. Teachers Association (13 Counties)

#1981 -**Jan Ken Po Gakko Parents / State Assembly Resolution,** Assemblymen Bannai-Mori.

#1985 -Sacramento **Human Rights Commission Award.**
(For International -Intercultural Affairs)

#1986-National JACler of the Biennium Award.(Chicago

(C) "DIGNITY. Oral Histories by Fran Buss

#Exhibit at the Smithsonian. 1986-87... Helped gather artifacts for: " A More Perfect Union: The Japanese Americans and the United States Constitution"

Appear on Video at the Smithsonian Exhibit with many other distinguished Niseis as Spokes person of internees experience. My voice is heard by millions! In 1997, Oct. 1, it is still being shown after ten years, despite hate-mail ,media-bashing! " This exhibit is unabashedly patriotic, most patriotic of anything seen in the past decade," Dr. Roger Kennedy. An inspiring courageous director, Dr. Kennedy made all of us understand what **A MORE PERFECT UNION REALLY MEANS!** (First planned for an exhibit to last five years, now going on ten. Some say, "Maybe until the year 2,000?" Now it is sometimes referred to it as a permanent exhibit!

" We don't always get it right but we keep trying"!....
Roger Kennedy, Director, Museum of American History

#Exhibit: 1989" Strength and Diversity,

The Japanese American Women " Helped borrow, loan and gathered artifacts for the Oakland Museum on Issei, Nisei and Sansei Women, Oakland California 1989.

My treasured Jan Ken Po Gakko parents', creative cultural heritage unique hand-crafted banner was first exhibited there.

#Exhibit: Sacramento History Center Project in 1990 -91
"Continuing Traditions the Japanese Americans from

1869- 1980." Helped gather artifacts and old items from Issei Community stored away in garages and barns. Many served as docents through the months "Gaman" was shown and many personal treasured artifacts: including Jan Ken Po Gakko unique hand crafted Banner, to the surprise delight of the parents of Jan Ken Po Gakko Parents the creators.

#1981: Every Year Since 1981, The first All Florin Home
Coming Reunion, and the Annual Florin JACL Time Of
Remembrance Event since 1983 till 1997...Exhibits have
been growing, improving, more clearly defined! (By
Urgent Necessity Started in Jan Ken Po Gakko in 1977).....

#Exhibited, March 2 1996, Florin JACL'S 14th Year

Years of persistent collecting (Updated, March 28, 1997, reporting about our fifteenth event) creating, new posters, to educate the 1200 students each year in the Elk Grove Unified School District supports our effort to have the children taught about this most import part of History that shocked the nation during time of WWII. It is in hopes of Touching the future of America with a clear legacy that would ensure Our Democracy to survive and become vibrant and strong for all people regardless of their diverse ethnicity that we continue. As Abraham Lincoln prayed while he was our great 16th President of the United States

"This nation "(of many ethnic, diverse people
will)"Under God" truly have a new birth of freedom
"so that the "Government of the people, by the people
and for the people shall not perish from the ea

National JACL Convention)

After 1987 We the People Published

#1988 -Tierra Del Oro Girl Scout Council Role -Model Award..

#1988 -Charter Member of the Elk Grove High School Hall of Fame.

#1988 -"Award of Merit for Publications" Sacto. County Historical Society for "WE The People a Story of Internment in America." (Co-author, Betty Pinkerton and I were recognized)

#1989 -Sacramento History Center Women in History Award for "Heroism"

#1989 -Soroptimist International of Rio Cosumnes "Women of Distinction Award'

1989 - February Elk Grove Unified School District Board of Education named a new school to be built in 1990 the Mary Tsukamoto Elementary School to be built West of Florin-Elk Grove Road, on Vintage Park Dr.

May 1989,- Chi State Delta Kappa Gamma Society's 1989 "Distinguished Public Service Award" accepted at the 1989 Chi State Convention Breakfast in Costa Mesa CA.

December 2, 1989-,Awarded "State Educator's Hall of Fame" The California State School Board elected to honor a graduate who has made significant contributions to society and whose accomplishments reflect the strength of the public school system. The Elk Grove School Board nominee won the honor in San Jose.

#1990 - Assemblyman Norman Watters, chose" Mary Tsukamoto, "the Woman of the Year." for his 7th district.

1990,- November ,Recognition of Dedication for the Success of Redress presented by the U.S. Justice Dept., Office of Redress Administration, Washington D.C. by Robert Bart at the Government Redress ceremony, November 9, 1990, at Sacramento.

#1992 -July 6 NEA Human and Civil Rights Commission ELLISON ONIZUKA MEMORIAL Awarded at the NEA National Convention (My sister Isabel Oshiro, Nami King, Al. and Marielle flew with me to Washington D.C.to accept the award before 2,000 National Educators Association delegates . There were nearly 9,000 at the convention but only 2,000 could be accommodated. It was a thrilling night!)

#1992 -Aug.. 31 st, Mary Tsukamoto School's opens with me leading the Flag Salute at 9:00 A.M. bright, early, wonderful

morning!

#1992 -Oct. 29. "An Evening for Mary Tsukamoto" by the EGUSD and Board of education, Staff, Colleagues, JACL life-long friends at the new school. 600 overflowed in the Multi-room! **The Daruma Eye is Painted!** This honor can't be topped if I lived a hundred years! With deep joy and gratitude, the Tsukamoto Family planned a ceramic tile mural gift designed with value symbols from two cultural heritage of Japan and the USA. Commissioned Yoshio Taylor, a widely acclaimed ceramic Artist, Sculptor and Instructor at Cosumnes College. He was born in Okinawa (his mother is Okinawan) We were proud he could do this special project.

1993 October 16 th WONDERFUL OLDER WOMEN AWARD (WOW) by the Capital Chapter of the OLDER WOMEN LEAGUE (OWL) exemplifying LAURA SHIELDS SPIRIT OF PUBLIC SERVICE.

1993 OCTOBER 29, Distinguished Public Service Award presented by the University of the Pacific Alumni Association

#1994 March 12, Mary Tsukamoto School corner stone laying and dedication ceremony.

1994 March 12 Dedication and Presentation of the Tsukamoto Mural, created by Yoshio Taylor a fine ceramic tile artist. It was a special gift from the family to the school, and its children. The design expressed all the symbols of value that I cherish from my **Japanese culture, from the Land of my Parents,** and my **American Culture, the land of my Birth.** It expresses my prayer for **world peace.** Appreciation for this land of **liberty and equal justice.** To become a **noble person with indomitable courage like the Daruma.** To value and **cherish beauty and perseverance like the "Hime te Mari** (Princess Ball Story). My earnest wish for each child is:

that they will find their finest dreams in life and strive to live, valuing friendship, generosity, honesty, sincerity To live as a proud American in a wonderful Land accepting full responsibility to preserve the precious heritage, envied the world over our U.S. Constitutional form of Government.

#1994, Nov. 16 A Private Reception at the CSUS Archival Library Honoring the Acceptance of First Historical Exhibit Material Of Japanese American History of Florin initially collected created by Mary Tsukamoto.

1994 November 17 At The Sacramento JACL's First Community Recognition Event: The Sacramento JACL Community Service Award a specially crafted medallion was presented.

1995 May 14 th At Anaheim, The Mary Tsukamoto

Elementary School was awarded, EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION, a California Distinguished School Recognition Award presented by our State School Superintendent, Delaine Eastin. Two EGUSD schools, **John Ehrhardt School and Mary Tsukamoto Schools were honored**,

June 15, 1995 Youth on the Move Inc... inducted, MARY TSUKAMOTO to the African American Educator's HALL OF FAME.

#1995 Several events held at the CSUS Archival Library with a special exhibit of barracks and all the historic and cultural items and my presentation on our Internment History was made. The event for the CSUS Alumni Reunion. Once in August a memorable Buddhist Nembutsu gathering attracted several hundred young people from the west Coast States that was very successful.

November 17 th 1996 , we celebrated **Al and Mary's 60th Wedding Anniversary.** An afternoon luncheon at the former Hoisin, now called Holiday Villa at 2:00 p.m. Great host family, relatives, cousins, nieces , nephews, their children ,cousins and relatives joined our longtime church friends, our JACL friends and special people, like Art Butler, (101 Years, my long time friend since teaching at Florin grammar school),CSUS archivist Georgiana White, Betty Pinkerton, co-author of our book, Linda Strom, Principal of Mary Tsukamoto Elementary School Ministers, special friends, Rev Ed and Margaret Bollinger (30 years in Okinawa), Rev Joren Mac Donald(Minister of the Buddhist Church), Don and Jeannine Wells, Pastor Of Florin Church 1964-72), Rev. Faith Whitmore(since 1987) and Frank Anderson , special Nisei friends of a long lifetime, for Al's 84 years in Florin. George Miyao, Moon Kurima Woody Ishikawa, Vivian Kara, George Oki (Kuzo loved George's Dad, Magoichi Oki).

Elk Grove School Board of Education Recognition of our efforts to teach about the Internment Experience and the Constitutional **Triumph!** **On February 18, 1997** a surprise presentation was made at the Elk Grove Unified School District's Board of Education Meeting. A lovely plaque was ***presented to Al and Mary Tsukamoto*** and also a ***special plaque to Florin JACL recognized*** for fifteen years of sincere effort made to educate Elk Grove students to become passionate responsible, effective citizens in our great Democracy!

Florin JACL members and their superb team of people committed to this challenging educational Project, includes **Ted Kobata and his crew** doing an excellent job, setting up and displaying a portion of a barrack (that can be dismantled) a superb, remarkable part of our exhibit, and the **Sacramento Nisei VFW #8985** their unfailing display and presentation made by **veterans** who share their experience, a meaningful task of educating the students. As partners of this exciting project: The Florin JACL, and the Elk Grove Unified School District.

Mary Tsukamoto School Children Semi -annually plan a trip to Washington D.C. I was asked if I could possibly go to Washington at that time. Marielle fortunately was able to take time

off from the Vice Principal's job at Feickert Elementary School at that time, the first week of June 1997. Happily, we were off to Washington D.C. on the 4th of June, returning on the fifth day, June 8th. Thrilled again on my fifth visit to see the Smithsonian at the Museum of American History on Constitution Ave.! To view again the most exciting exhibit opened exactly ten years ago: On our personal bitter experience, in America, the Internment of Americans of Japanese Ancestry and the Heroic Nisei soldiers who fought so gallantly and gave their lives fully to show their intense loyalty for the only country, they ever had, even if they and their families were still imprisoned by The Government who treated us as unreliable suspected, potential spies of this land during the terrible World War II! They were heroic rescuers of the famed Texas Battalion lost in the Vosges Mountain top surrounded by enemies for months! Our Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Team rescued the 275 Texans in a dangerous fight, climbing huge cliffs, falling in the dark not able to cry out because they needed to make a sneak attack. Eight hundred of our boys were casualties to rescue the 275.! They had no time to rest, after having liberated the Village of Bruyres, France. They went forth to take the challenge of the "Rescue of the Lost Battalion."

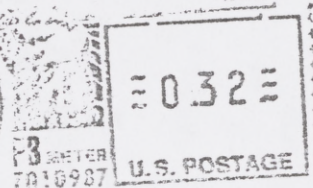
While their own families were still imprisoned by the Government in ten isolated Internment Camps! This fact caught the Great Smithsonian director's attention.! Dr. Roger Kennedy could not ignore it! When the "Go for Broke" Nisei Veterans offered their exhibit for the Smithsonian, Dr. Roger Kennedy knew that America needs to know the entire story of the Japanese Americans. Thus was born the magnificent Smithsonian Exhibit entitled: **For a More Perfect Union: The Japanese Americans and the United States Constitution!**

At the Senate Floor on an unforgettable day,
On May 22, 1997, was surprised beyond words to receive the State of California's second designation in recognition of ethnically diverse Californians of the State of California. (The first person honored was California's twelfth Governor, a Latino, Romauldo Pacheco). I was first given such recognition as a **Notable Asian American of the State of California and allowed to speak on the Senate floor!** Many contributions have been made by outstanding Asians throughout the state of California's history. I 'm overwhelmed to find myself the one to accept this distinct honor! It is much more than I truly deserve. I am profoundly humbled to have been so honored, to be presented a beautiful plaque from the California State Senate, by our own district Senator, The Honorable, Patrick Johnston.

One of the Honorees at the California Asian Pacific American Experience. Awarded and Honored. To observe the one hundred fifty Years of California's History, from the Gold Rush of 1849 to California's initiation into Statehood. **SESQUICENTENNIAL** (Ses-kwi-sen-ten-ee-ul). The California Asian Pacific American Experience (CAPAE) by "Rediscover California's Gold: Its Spirit, Its people, and its Promise." We were called together at The Hyatt REGENCY HOTEL on September 25, 1997.

.....Updated October 19, 1997 ...Mary Tsukamoto

California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, California
95814



Marielle Tsukamoto
9132 Doc Bar Court
Elk Grove, CA 95624



In Memoriam



The California State Senate on
January 8, 1998
adjourned in memory of

Mary Tsukamoto

On behalf of the California Senate,
may I express my deepest sympathy.

Patrick Johnston
Ralph C. Bills

Senator Patrick Johnston 5th District
Senator Ralph Bills



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House of Representatives

TRIBUTE TO MARY TSURUKO TSUKAMOTO

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an educator, activist, and leader of national prominence: Mary Tsuruko Tsukamoto. Mrs. Tsukamoto passed away on January 6, leaving a tremendous legacy as a teacher, activist, and hero to countless Americans. Today, in Sacramento, California, she will be fondly remembered at two separate memorial services.

The child of immigrants from Okinawa, Mary Tsuruko Dakuzaku was born in San Francisco in 1915. Her family moved to the Florin area just south of Sacramento in 1925. There, she attended segregated schools. By the beginning of World War II, she had married the man with whom she would spend the next six decades, Alfred Tsukamoto. In 1942, along with their five year old daughter, Marielle, the Tsukamotos were among the more than 10,000 Japanese Americans interned in government camps around the U.S.

After the end of World War II, the Tsukamotos returned to Northern California. Al took a job at the Sacramento Army Depot, while Mary began her vocation as a teacher in 1950. It was in her role as educator that Mary Tsukamoto first began to touch the lives of so many in the Sacramento area. Her unique ability to connect with young people became the trademark of her teaching career at four different elementary schools until her retirement in 1976.

But Mary's retirement from teaching in the Elk Grove, California School District was just the beginning of the most influential period of her life. Her family's forced internment during World War II had left a profound mark on her personal and political beliefs. Fueled by the injustice of the imprisonment of Japanese Americans, Mary launched a courageous crusade to right this national wrong.

In the 1980's Mary joined the fight in support of a national apology and reparations for the Japanese Americans interned during World War II. These efforts included testifying before a congressional committee about the lasting negative impact that the imprisonment had on Japanese Americans throughout our nation. Without her steadfast and vocal championship of this legislation, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, including an apology and reparations, would never have become law.

On a very personal note, Mary's friendship and support during this often difficult legislative battle was invaluable to my

colleagues and I as we fought for the reparations bill. I will always value the unique perspective, encouragement, and dedication she offered throughout this important effort.

By the time President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 into law, Mary had become a nationally-recognized leader in preserving and promoting the Japanese American heritage. She helped create and plan an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution about the internment and she authored a book on the subject. Mary also launched an important effort to catalogue and preserve Japanese American artifacts, personal histories, and photographs with the creation of the Japanese American Archival Collection at California State University, Sacramento.

Her activism in these areas, and reputation as a national leader in the fight to provide restitution to the Japanese Americans who were forcibly relocated during the Second World War, brought her back into the classrooms of Sacramento area schools as a unique source of historical information for our community's students. In conjunction with the Florin Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, Mary set out to retell the glorious and sometimes painful history of Japanese Americans in the twentieth century U.S.

Yet Mary Tsukamoto's activist endeavors were not limited solely to the imprisonment issue. She also found time to lead Jan Ken Po Gakko, a group which preserves the Japanese heritage in the United States. Her involvement in this organization enhanced her already remarkable pursuits in putting together lectures, creating displays, and writing about the internment of Japanese Americans.

By the early 1990's Mary Tsukamoto's achievements were gaining recognition throughout California. In 1992, a new elementary school was named after her in the Vintage Park area of South Sacramento. In May of 1997, she was named a "Notable Californian" by the California State Senate and State Capitol Museum, making her the second person to ever receive this high honor. Last September, she was presented with the California Asian Pacific Sesquicentennial Award for all of her accomplishments in the Asian/American community.

Mr. Speaker, as Mary Tsukamoto is eulogized today by her many friends and admirers, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this extraordinary activist, teacher, and powerful leader. Her impact on our national heritage and the very fabric of who we are as a country will be felt for many generations to come. I salute her personal strength and determination in educating her fellow citizens, pursuing justice, and promoting the heritage of all Japanese Americans.